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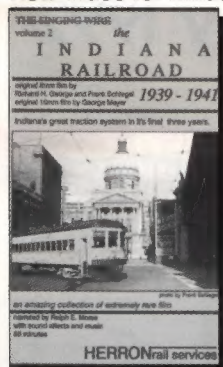
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BUSES

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January 1992

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Optare's new Spectra double-decker.
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Welcome to the new-look *Buses*! We hope you like what you see, and you will find that much of the content is in a similar vein to what has gone before. It just looks rather different, with a new appearance to take us into the 1990s. We are very pleased to have been able to employ the services of Ray Stenning, a name well-known to many regular readers, in giving the appearance of *Buses* a 'clean sweep', and on p13 you will find an interview with Ray which will hopefully give some insight into what we have done.

Whatever else may have changed we are still committed to the view that the bus has a great deal to offer as a readily-available, economic and efficient means of combatting the ever-increasing twin evils of traffic congestion and environmental pollution, and to a concern that the political climate of this country is not one which is conducive to enabling the bus to realise its potential. This is not necessarily a party political viewpoint; it so happens that the current administration has been in power slightly longer than the present editor's tenure of this post, so his salvos have sometimes been seen as party political. But from dim and distant memories of 'the other lot' being in power, we don't recall them having done a great deal to unleash the bus industry's potential either!

So it was with some disappointment that the chancellor's autumn statement, while following the Government's apparently pro public transport line, did not actually allocate any funds at all to the bus industry, all funds made available being entirely for rail projects. And while there are a few promising signs such as Stagecoach's big order reported in the last two issues of *Buses* and a hefty(-ish) order from London Buses calling for nearly 150 buses (it sounds good until you realise that 150 new buses a year for London Buses would allow the fleet to be replaced in something over 30 years!) there is still a long way to go before modern, inviting, environmentally-friendly buses can have a real effect in prising people out of their beloved cars.

It has to be said that the current Government is at last making all that right noises about public transport, and has recognised that it simply cannot carry on building enough roads to meet

the demand, but it is still hidebound by its own dogma. In many ways the bus industry is now much more efficient than it was prior to deregulation, and there are aspects of the old pre-Ridley regime to which few of us would want to return. But pure commercialism and the mere pursuit of profit is not going to make buses into the useful tool to ease congestion that they could be. It takes far more than a commercial outlook to invest heavily in new buses, and decent infrastructure, for a well-planned and attractive network which needs to be in place before any measures can be taken to make car use less desirable. And who is going to do that in the knowledge that when the passenger traffic has begun to build up Bloggins Buses down the road can buy a fleet of old Nationals at £3,000 a time and cream it all off?

The forthcoming opening of the Manchester Metrolink and the steady, if slow, progress of other Metro systems in some ways does herald a bright new dawn for public transport. These systems are to be applauded, but as we have said before they are expensive, take a lot of time and effort to develop and at the end of the day benefit only a small proportion of the population. How much better it would be if such systems were the 'icing on the cake', an improvement and adjunct to an already attractive and efficient public transport system. Instead they are the be all and end all of investment in public transport in our major cities and when open will make the existing systems look even more shabby and down at heel in comparison. Yet a comparatively small investment and change in attitude could change that image of existing bus operations and at the same time preserve those few jobs which still remain in the British bus manufacturing business.

We wish all our readers a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.



EDITOR

Editorial contributions

We are pleased to consider articles and photographs (black & white prints or colour transparencies only, please) for possible publication in *Buses*. Transparencies should be 35mm or larger. Material accepted will be retained and paid for at standard rates on publication. Items which cannot be used will be returned if accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. Photographs should be clearly marked on the reverse (or on transparency mounts) with your name, address and subject details.

Such material is provided at the contributor's own risk; we regret that Ian Allan Ltd cannot be held responsible for loss or damage howsoever caused.

We are also always very grateful to receive news items; those for the Fleet News sections should be sent direct to the relevant author at the addresses shown in those sections, and items of more general news should be sent to the editor.

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IAN ALLAN
Publishing

this month's news stories

Mercedes accolade

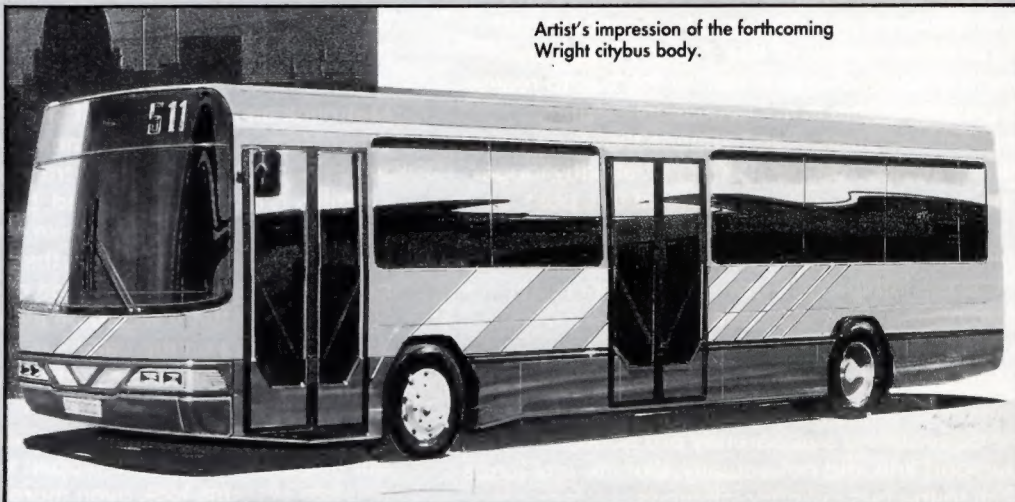
The recently-launched Mercedes-Benz O 404 coach ('News Update', *Buses* October 1991) has been elected Coach of the Year 1992 by a panel of specialist journalists from 12 European countries. It gained marks for its safety aspects, both active and passive, handling, passenger comfort and environmental considerations, in both its operation and production, and also for the amount of the vehicle which is recyclable. All plastic parts weighing more than 100g are marked so that it will be possible to recycle more than 90% of them and almost all metals used can also be recycled.



Citybus body from Wrights

Robert Wright & Son, the Ballymena-based coachbuilder, is to introduce a new low-floor full-size single-deck citybus body in spring of 1992. The body is available, according to Wrights, for 'most current rear-engined chassis', and looks most likely to appear on the Dennis Lance to start with, and uses the Alusuisse aluminium construction system which Wrights pioneered in the UK. The body is described by the company as 'a stylish vehicle, designed to promote an up-market image for urban bus operators'.

Wright's is best known for its smaller bus bodies, and it has recently had success with its Handybus body for the Dennis Dart. However during the 1980s it built the Contour coach body, also using the Alusuisse system, developed in conjunction with Bedford and based mainly on Bedford chassis, and its TT body enjoyed some success with welfare operators and has seen psv service with some operators, notably Maidstone.



Artist's impression of the forthcoming Wright citybus body.

Northern Counties picking up . .

Northern Counties, currently in administrative receivership, looks to have a rosier future following some recent orders. As previously announced the company had had an order for 10 Leyland Olympians for East Yorkshire and four for East Kent. These have been followed by a substantial order for London Buses, calling for 40 bodies on Scania N113DRB chassis (see 'In London', p10), an order for five Countybus single-deck bodies on 9m Dennis Dart chassis for Warrington, following the 8.5m bus shown at Coach & Bus '91, and three dual-door 9.8m Darts for D & J International at Barking, which already has a

Northern Counties Countybus body on a Dennis Dart for Warrington. Five more are to follow.

Carlyle dual-door-bodied Dart in service at London City Airport.

Northern Counties handed over a two-door Volvo Citybus to London General on 4 December.

. . .and orders for Dennis and Alexander

Dennis has received its first orders for its new Lance single-deck chassis. So far 40 have been ordered, 16 with Alexander

PS-type bodywork for London Buses, and 24, also with Alexander bodywork, to be supplied in kit form, for Kowloon Motor Bus, Hong Kong, which recently received its 1,000th Dennis bus. The KMB Lances are to feature air conditioning.

Alexander has also received an order from AEG Westinghouse Transportation Systems, Pittsburgh, to supply 25 C100 People Movers for airport use at Honolulu and Hartsfield Atlanta airports. The people movers are 12m long, 2.83m wide and 3.24m high, have eight sliding doors and are driverless. Alexander-built people movers are already in service at Orlando, Florida, and Stansted airports.

The Dennis Lance will be featured in more detail in next month's *Buses*.



Blazefield acquires two more companies

Cambridge Travel Services of Waterbeach, the only company not acquired from AJS by Blazefield Holdings last summer, has now been purchased after a period of being managed on behalf of AJS.

Fourteen coaches have been acquired, although four D-registration Volvos were traded in against four G-registration examples to update the fleet. The company is to move its base to Premier Park, the former depot of Premier Travel.

Also acquired are seven buses and several routes of Lucketts of

Watford from proprietor George Hutchings, who intends to retire soon. Operations have moved to a new base at North Mymms, which opened as an operating base for WATFORDBus and HERTSRider services on 10 November. Engineering activities move from St Albans depot to a new six-bay workshop on the North Mymms site on 1 January and most of the buses housed on the Welwyn Hatfield Line site at Codicote move there on 5 January. Luckybus services are now incorporated into Sovereign Harrow.

Sheffield operators agree new code of conduct

Sheffield's nine major bus operators have agreed a new code of conduct designed to reduce central area congestion and elicit the support of the city council in providing more bus priority measures. Supertram construction, increased private car use and more buses have brought peak time traffic congestion in the city to crisis point.

Operators have agreed to a voluntary 15% cut in bus numbers, together with area zoning of terminals to prevent all routes using the same streets. Out-of-city routes will be altered

to terminate at the Transport Interchange in return for better pedestrian routes to the terminal. The agreement complements the code of conduct agreed in March 1989 which agreed to limit layover time in the city centre.



Longworth to buy Shearings buses

Former Shearings transport director Ian Longworth has been named as preferred bidder for the north-western bus operations of Shearings. Longworth, who left the company during the summer, beat off three serious rivals for the deal worth nearly £5 million. Details were still being finalised but around 60 vehicles have been purchased, which include all the Leyland Tiger and Volvo buses. Depots at Bolton, St Helens and Shifnal are also included.

Longworth has been joined by operations director David Wood, also from Shearings and Peter Green of Vales Coaches, Manchester in a new company,

Runrace Ltd. Headquarters in the Wigan area are being secured.

Shearings operational depots are being cut to five for the 1992 season, as the company disposes of its buses and cuts its tour coach fleet from 570 to 400. Only Bryn, Chester-le-Street, Exhall, Skewen and Tunbridge Wells depots will remain operational, with the remainder being sold or closed. Cranage remains as a tours interchange, and Llandudno is currently up for sale as an operational entity.

The Tunbridge Wells bus operation passed to Maidstone & District on 2 December.

Merseytravel to improve passenger facilities

Merseytravel is proposing a £15m range of measures to improve passenger environments throughout the Merseyside region. A major refurbishment of Kirkby bus station is proposed in partnership with Knowsley Council, as is the redevelopment of Liverpool city centre terminals at Roe Street and the central bus station. Improvements to facilities at existing bus stations and the introduction of high quality bus shelters on major routes are also envisaged.

Prepaid tickets in Metropolitan areas

West Yorkshire bus operators have pulled out of the Saverstrip multi-journey ticket system operated by West Yorkshire PTE, after complaining at the high levels of discount (16%) and fraud. Operators continue to accept the PTE countywide Metrocard, but some, like Yorkshire Rider, are considering area-wide prepaid tickets of their own.

GM Buses and most Manchester bus operators have devised a new prepayment scheme for Greater Manchester, which is administered by the PTE. GMB pulled out of the older PTE-devised scheme last

September, and set up its own prepaid tickets which are priced cheaper than those for all operators.

Merseytravel has introduced a new 'tamper proof' Saveaway day ticket which is being accepted by all operators including Merseybus which has its own range of pre-paid tickets. Some other operators which devised the Rainbow day-ticket withdrew it in September. Merseytravel has also introduced a bus-only zonal ticket costing half of the equivalent multimodal zonal ticket.

New bus operators in Yorkshire

Nigel Jolliffe, formerly managing director of a number of AJS subsidiaries, has obtained an operator's licence for 12 vehicles based in Hunslet, Leeds in the name of Quickstep Travel. Andrew Gunning, formerly general manager of SUT Ltd, has applied for an operator's licence for 20 vehicles based at Brightside, Sheffield in the name of Tanport Ltd.

Paul Bell, formerly managing director of Compass Bus of Wakefield, has re-entered bus operation by introducing two routes from Wakefield with his

new company Yorkshire Travel. Bell undertook to abstain from local service operation for two years, when his company was sold to Caldaire subsidiary West Riding in November 1989.



SYT wins appeal

A decision in SYT's favour came in December from the Court of Appeal on the case of the Secretary of State for Trade for Industry and the Monopolies & Mergers Commission v South Yorkshire Transport. SYT had successfully overturned an MMC directive to sell its acquired companies at a judicial review in the High Court in March. This judgement was challenged in November before three judges including the Master of the Rolls, Lord Donaldson.

Wagons-Lits' Hull connection

Voyage National, the French-based subsidiary of Kingston upon Hull City Transport (KHCT), has been awarded the contract to transport Wagons-Lits clients on mainland Europe. KHCT's UK coaching subsidiaries, Kingstonian and York Pullman, undertake any such work when Wagons-Lits customers reach the UK.

Kinch to move depot

Gilbert Kinch, currently running a network of competitive services in Nottingham and Clifton is planning to open a new depot at Wymswold, Leicestershire, on the expiry of the lease on the present depot at Bunny, inherited from Kevin Gagg. Kinch is responding to the Nottingham City Transport minibus initiative with the introduction of higher frequencies and three Willowbrook Warrior-rebodied Tigers. The company has also won £1.5m of supported work for eight vehicles.

Europa team moves

Most of the former management of Europa Coachbuilders of Doncaster have formed a new company, Autobus Classique Ltd which is building a similar range, as seen at Coach & Bus '91. It is facing competition from Crystals Conversions of Doncaster which has acquired the rights and goodwill to the Europa designs from the receivers. Crystals has taken some Europa skilled staff on and hopes to restart production of the successful Europa Enterprise midibus body.

Matthews leaves Plaxton

David Matthews, chairman of Plaxton group plc, which combines Plaxton and Henlys Motor Group, has resigned to pursue other interests. He has been succeeded by non-executive chairman by Michael Doherty, deputy chairman and chief executive of Norcross plc. He was Henlys' chairman from 1984 to 1989 when Plaxton took over. Robert Wood, also a former Henlys' man, who has been Plaxton group managing director since last year, assumes the role of chief executive.

David Matthews joined the Plaxton group following its acquisition of Kirkby's in 1987. As well as providing entrepreneurial flair which has transformed Plaxton over the last few years he was an outspoken lobbyist for the case of good public transport with radical views on the funding and provision of bus services and on putting quality into buses.

Plaxton's new flagship, the Excalibur, on a Volvo B10M chassis.



Guided busways proposed for Hull

Humberside County Council has accepted a consultants' report proposing an £84m programme to improve traffic management in Hull. Central to the proposals is a network of three guided busways from the city limits to the centre along main routes. Other measures include express bus lanes, park & ride interchanges, traffic calming and road enhancements. Public consultation is now under way, and if approved, proposals for the largest guided network in the UK will be submitted to the DTP.

Diary dates

16 January:

Buses Worldwide. Illustrated talk by John Smith on Impressions of Northern/Central Portugal. St Pancras Church House, Lancing Street, London, 19.00hrs.

28 January:

Omnibus Society Presidential Address. Brian King, managing director, Trent Buses. LT Headquarters, 55 Broadway, London SW1, 18.45hrs.

The Leicestershire Museums Technology Association has asked us to point out that it is holding a Leicestershire and Leicestershire day at the National Tramway Museum, Crich on 7 June and owners of vehicles with a Leicestershire connection are invited to attend. It will announce further details later.

Leeds applies for tramway powers

Leeds City Council has lodged a Parliamentary Bill for a rapid transit tramway in the south of the city. An eight-mile tramway from Tingley to the city centre is proposed as Phase 1 of a £96m project which is part of a larger £620m plan including guided busways in the city.

Awards for Ray Stenning

Two liveries designed by Ray Stenning of Best Impressions, who has been responsible for the redesign of Buses, have won awards in the Commercial Motor Livery Awards. They are the Streetline livery designed for London Buses and the Guildford link livery for the Park & Ride scheme in Guildford. He has also won an award for his publicity material in the American magazine *Bus Ride*.

PSV registrations

Manufacturer	October 1991*	Total 1991*
DAF	8 (1)	121 (183)
Dennis	16 (35)	354 (316)
Duple	0 (1)	5 (19)
Iveco	0 (1)	1 (6)
Leyland	51 (38)	392 (763)
MAN	0 (0)	15 (3)
Optare	11 (3)	110 (38)
Scania	25 (20)	130 (197)
Volvo	12 (29)	409 (643)
Other British	0 (0)	5 (16)
Other imports	7 (11)	144 (215)
Total British	78 (77)	866 (1,152)
Total imports	52 (62)	820 (1,247)
Grand total	130 (139)	1,686 (2,399)

*Figures in brackets for the same period in 1990. Source — SMMT

Legislation update

ALAN MILLAR

For the first in this occasional series, we have taken the opportunity of catching up with some recent changes in the law affecting the operation of buses and coaches.

Marker lights

Since 1 April last, all vehicles over 2.3m wide have had to be fitted with front and rear marker lights to conform with the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulation of 1989. Two matching white lights should be visible from the front and two matching red lights should be visible from the rear. They must be fitted no more than 400mm from the edges of the vehicle and as high as possible on the bodywork. The front lights must be mounted clear of the windscreens.

Speed limiters

Since 1 April, all post-March 1974 coaches and buses with more than 16 seats and a gross weight of over 7.5 tonnes and which are capable of exceeding 60mph have had to be fitted with approved specification speed limiters which govern their speed to 70mph. The regulations were phased in over the previous two years. Vehicles are exempt only where documentary evidence proves they cannot exceed 60mph. The Interurban version of the new Optare Spectra

double-decker, with four-speed Voith gearbox, includes a speed limiter.

Driver licensing

Also since 1 April it has now been possible for car licence holders to drive large buses (with more than 16 seats) non-commercially if they can satisfy the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency of their experience, health and conduct record. They have until 1 April 1992 to submit these claims, a requirement under the Driving Licence Regulations of 1987.

At a date yet to be announced, photographs will be included on all British driving licences. The Department of Transport says this is unlikely to happen for several years.

Centre exit doors

By 1 April 1993 all post-April 1980 buses with remotely controlled centre exit doors must be fitted with safety interlocks to prevent the bus from moving off if the doors have not closed properly. They must also be fitted with a warning sign in the driver's cab to show when the doors have not closed. This follows a number of fatal and near-fatal accidents, mainly in London, where passengers have been caught in exit doors and dragged along as the bus has moved off.

Registration notes

D. J. STANIER

Custom Marks were introduced by the DVLA in August 1991, comprising two price brackets. A to H prefix marks are used in both cases, with 2-20 attracting the higher band if names/popular abbreviations are used, while 1-20 with remaining letter combinations are available at a lower price.

Meanwhile, omissions during year 'J' include ROE/G/N/V (Birmingham); DES (Dundee); MAD (Gloucester); MAY (Leicester); MEG/MEW (Peterborough); BAB/CAB (Worcester). Swansea issued J-Uxx before J-Txx marks, and

London (Central) J-CUW/CYE were used for vehicle advertising purposes.

Re-registration activities of note during late-summer comprise **Inverness**, which moved from HAS-X to TSK-Y, NAS-Y to CJS-Y and D-GAS to D-OJS. **Swindon** appears to be using EAM-V and EHR-V concurrently.

Reports for offshore island issues comprise CMN-F (Isle of Man); J 82268 (Jersey); 60363 (Guernsey) and AY 2302 (Alderney). No doubt J-SCY has been authorised for Scilly, but numbers are not yet known.

and finally . . . anyone lost a bus stop?

A bus stop sign was found on the pavement in Waunfawr near Caernarfon a few weeks ago. Nothing particularly unusual about that, except that it had a Greater Glasgow PTE logo on it. It has reached Gwynedd County Council, who are not quite sure what to do with it, as Greater Glasgow became Strathclyde

about 11 years ago and tended not to operate bus services in Gwynedd anyway. The Public Transport Section of the Planning Department at Gwynedd County Council, County Offices, Caernarfon would be interested to hear from anyone who knows anything about it.

Two new London books, a Stagecoach update and models of Coventry buses

Many of the books, models and videos reviewed in this magazine can be obtained from the Ian Allan Bookshops at 47 Stephenson Street, Birmingham B2 4DH (tel 021-643 2496) and 45/46 Lower Marsh, London SE1 (tel 071-401 2100).

Ian Allan titles may be obtained from the Mail Order Dept at Bookpoint Ltd, 39 Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4TD (tel 0235 831700); please add £2.00 for postage on orders under £25.00.

RF

KEN GLAZIER 272mm x 210mm 136pp
CAPITAL TRANSPORT **£16.95**

It is often surprising just how much variety existed in a standardised class like the RFs and even disregarding the quantity of pictures of non-RF types in this new book the photographs are still very varied. The book opens with seven pages of superb colour photos, all showing RFs in various guises without resorting to pictures of preserved buses. Indeed all the way through the author has avoided the temptation to use pictures of preserved buses so all are shown in a variety of 'natural habitats'. As one has come to expect of this publisher the book is a very complete record of the type, and includes copious appendices with all manner of details of the type. These include chassis numbers, dates into service and initial allocations, body/chassis codes, modifications, including the Green Line modernisation programme, dates withdrawn (extending over no less than 17 years!) and so on. The text is very comprehensive and the reproduction of the many photographs is consistently good. At £16.95 it represents good value for money and forms an attractive description of a popular type.

BUS & COACH RECOGNITION LONDON'S BUSES

KEVIN LANE 185mm x 120mm 128pp
IAN ALLAN PUBLISHING **£6.95**

The latest addition to this popular series takes a subject which has become increasingly an interesting one and a complex one. London's buses have always attracted more than their fair share of interest, even in the days when everything in the centre was red and everything on the edges was green and most was AEC. Nowadays the bus scene is more colourful and varied and it is often difficult to remember who operates what and where. This new volume is an invaluable pocket-sized guide which describes all the various companies operating on London Transport services, including the various London Buses companies, as well as other operators likely to be seen in and around the area. It has a section on coaches in the capital and a

useful area by area guide to what you may see where. It is well illustrated and is sufficiently up to date to encompass some of the latest developments, particularly in Walthamstow where the situation has been changing almost day by day.

METROLINK OFFICIAL HANDBOOK

210mm x 145mm 64pp
TRANSPORT PUBLISHING CO **£4.95**

Light rail appears to be the watchword of local urban transport for the 1990s. It remains to be seen whether the Manchester Metrolink remains one of a very select few British systems or the first of many; either way it is a worthy addition to many notable transport achievements clocked up by the city over the last 165 years or so and hopefully the horrendous disruption its construction has brought to road traffic in central Manchester lately will soon be but a memory.

The opening of Metrolink, which is now due to happen in February, has spawned a good deal of publications about light rail (and it should be added that our own *Modern Tramway* has developed a new style and a new title, *Light Rail and Modern Tramway*, to celebrate the dawn of the new tram age in Britain) and TPC has certainly stolen a march with this official handbook. It is a handsome small volume, full colour throughout its 64 pages, and is packed with facts about the background to Metrolink, its construction, the routes and various aspects of its forthcoming operation. Full marks too for the inclusion of pictures of the first Metrolink car moving on the city centre track, an event which took place only a few weeks before the book came out. The text is thoroughly readable and it makes a fascinating and colourful account of one of the most significant developments in urban transport in Britain for many a year.

BUSES MEAN BUSINESS

STAGECOACH VOL 2 KEITH A. JENKINSON
295mm x 210mm 88pp
AUTOBUS REVIEW
PUBLICATIONS **£10.95**

Producing a history of Stagecoach and its subsidiaries is a task somewhat akin to painting the Forth Bridge; no sooner is it finished than so much has changed that you have to start again. Thus after only three years Keith Jenkinson has had to produce a second volume of his history of the company, to take into account acquisitions such as Bluebird Northern and Fife Scottish, the hoohah over the Portsmouth-area operations, additional English takeovers and moves into places such as Malawi and Canada. There is no doubt that it is a fascinating subject and it is a shame that several of the more significant developments of the period are submerged in a welter of more trivial information. There are some interesting pictures, and reproduction generally is acceptable, though we were a bit unsure about the use of eight or nine pictures on each of the four colour pages it contains. At least this treatment enables plenty of the many liveries absorbed into Stagecoach to be depicted, but it tends not to do any of them justice. There also seems to be a bit of a preoccupation with derelict vehicles. There is some fascinating material tucked away in this book, though with a little less detail and a few less photographs it might have been more digestible.

THE BUSES OF COVENTRY SET

CORGI TOYS **approx £25**

There is no doubt that the two Corgi Toys models that comprise this limited-edition set make a handsome pair. They are beautifully finished in accurate Coventry livery, complete with fleetnames, crests, registration numbers and appropriate blinds in the correct style. Less fortunate is the authenticity of the pair. The vehicles are intended to be Coventry 293 (EKV 293), which was a 1942 Roe-bodied Bedford OWB 32-seater and 125 (JKV 125), a 1950 MCCW-bodied Maudslay Regent III. As one might expect Corgi has used existing models in the range, respectively its Duple Vista-bodied OB and the Regent III model which is in fact an adaptation of the Routemaster with an AEC exposed radiator and bonnet assembly grafted on to it. Therefore the modern four-bay Routemaster lines give a poor representation of a five-bay 1950 MCCW body, just as the sweeping curves of the Duple Vista are far removed from the square lines of the utility body which graced 293 in its short life with Coventry. In fairness Corgi does itself credit by being honest about the fact, and in its accompanying descriptive notes admits that with their utility bodywork Coventry's OWBs 'were a little different from the Corgi Bedford OB'. The two models are to a different scale, the OB oddly being much larger than the double-decker other than in height. The OB model has been much improved by the addition of some nicer wheels than on earlier versions and is a very good representation of the type, if not of Coventry 293! They look beautiful and come in a nice presentation box but cannot really be construed as authentic!

LT — the beginning of the end?

In London is the new title for the London column in *Buses* and although the name is different little else is changed.

We begin under the new title with news announced by the Prime Minister John Major at the Guildhall in November. Although overshadowed by the announcement that Docklands Light Railway is to be taken out of LT control, the news that London Transport is not after all to be appointed the London Bus Authority to oversee London's buses and sort out tendering etc is likely to have a much greater effect on users of public transport in London after bus deregulation. Once again in terms of the relative importance placed on the two issues by the media the buses have come out as the poor relation to light rail, even though the Docklands Light Railway, which has had to be supplemented by buses anyway, has much less significance in terms of London's transport as a whole than the buses do.

Not much else has been said about the London Bus Authority issue yet. It was by no means a foregone

conclusion that LT would be appointed to this new role, which will be of vital importance to ensure some semblance of order out of the chaos which is bound to ensue when the buses are deregulated, but LT's experience of running buses for 60 years cannot be underestimated and the specific experience of the tendered bus unit would surely have been valuable to the new deregulated environment when it comes about.

It remains to be seen what will happen to LT in the long term; there seems little point in it remaining as an authority to oversee just the Underground, and at a time when London desperately needs an efficient transport system we are moving away from the sort of coordination which is vital. It also remains to be seen what will happen to Travelcard; the assertion that market forces will keep Travelcard going do not sound too convincing when operators in other metropolitan centres are getting out of similar schemes.

New buses for London!

Perhaps rather surprising news, in view of recent past performance, is that London Buses is spending £10million on 149 new buses. Unlike other recent piecemeal orders for buses for London, these are actually vehicles for fleet replacement and are not for specific contracts. They are also (in the main) good news for the British bus industry, although the likes of Leyland and Dennis will perhaps not be too charmed at the choice of 40 Scania N113DRBs, particularly in view of the 20 Scania recently purchased for the DLR services. However they are to be bodied by Northern Counties, giving that beleaguered firm a much-needed fillip. Dennis does benefit, however, with 54 Darts (40 with Reeve Burgess Pointer bodywork and 14 with Wrights) and 16 examples of the new full-size single-deck chassis, the Lance, to be bodied by Alexander, the first UK order for this new type. Also on order are 20 dual-door Optare Spectras, to follow on from the two pre-production vehicles already announced, and 19 Optare Deltas which will join the demonstrator (also to be bought) at East London. These are in addition to 37 Darts previously announced at Coach & Bus '91. London Buses has managed to save the £10million by more effective control on its working capital to enable these purchases.

This is all good news for manufacturers and can only help them in these straitened times, but it is ironic to note that in London, the very capital of the British double-decker, all the double-deckers are on foreign chassis.

Armchair in court

Armchair Passenger Transport, operator of LT routes 65 and 260, as well as other services on the fringes of London, is in the news for the wrong reasons. The Metropolitan Police issued around 200 charges to the company concerning excessive drivers' hours and duty rosters, insufficient rest between shifts and insufficient fortnightly rests for drivers in contravention of section 6 of the 1968 Transport Act. At the time of writing Armchair had managed to get police proceedings adjourned until 2 December to allow its solicitors more time to prepare the defence.

Cold comfort on the 12

London Central is currently running an open-top Routemaster on the 12 in the evenings, between Marble Arch and Peckham Rye only, to allow passengers to make the most of the Christmas lights. East London's RMC1515 has been borrowed, and it will run daily until 3 January, having started on 7 December. It leaves Camberwell Green at 16.32, arriving Marble Arch (traffic permitting!) at 17.12, and then departures from Marble Arch to Peckham Rye are 17.25, 19.30 (to Camberwell Green only), 21.45 and 23.30 (Camberwell Green only).

LT's 'Human Touch'

Bus stations and bus stops have now been separated out too into a new bit of LT, London Transport Bus Passenger Infrastructure (quite a mouthful!). Quite how long it remains part of LT remains to be seen, as the new London Bus Authority will have responsibility for bus stops and stations when it comes into being. The new organisation has initiated a programme to appoint 'Controllers' to bus stations, to provide an on-site presence to assist passengers and help in the management of bus stations seven days a week. It will be up to the Controller to provide information on LT services in the area by liaison with whatever companies run buses in the locality, to maintain a safe environment, ensure that facilities are clean and serviceable and — perhaps the most important part — to make sure that the publicity on display is up to date. To begin with Controllers have been appointed to Walthamstow and Golders Green bus stations, with more to come.

Route changes

The London Northern changes to the 13 and 82 were deferred until 30 November, while the conversion of the 46 to SRs went ahead from 16 November and the route is to continue to Farringdon Street after all.

From 9 November the 27 was taken on by London United under LT contract (allocated to Stamford Brook) and shortened at both ends. It now runs Turnham Green-Camden Town. Through running replaces the previous overlapping sections. The 135 runs at an increased frequency between Archway and Camden Town to cover that section of the route whilst at the western end an extension of the 391 via Kew Gardens Road covers the Turnham Green-Richmond part. This meant that a Sunday service has been introduced on the 391 operated by R&I Tours, using 9m Dennis Darts usually used on the C11/12. The remainder of the route remains with London United at Stamford Brook. The re-routing of the 391 also takes in part of the 90 between Richmond and Kew Gardens; however this route now reaches Northolt station daily rather than just Monday-Friday.

In Selkent route 108^B was withdrawn and new midibus route 202 introduced from 9 November between Crystal Palace and Blackheath.

From 30 November route 152 was converted to midibus and extended from Mitcham to the Eastfields estate, replacing route 352 completely, thus introducing a Sunday service to Eastfields for the first time. However the section between New Malden and Kingston is withdrawn and left covered by just the 131. The first part of the Wood Green scheme has been introduced in advance of the rest; the W4 midibus route between Wood Green and Broadwater Farm commenced Monday-Saturday operation from 30 November, and is expected to go daily from February.

New look 607 . . .

The 607 Express, Centrewest's limited-stop service over the 207 route between Uxbridge and Shepherds Bush, was upgraded from 16 November. The Metrobus operation has been replaced with a mixture of Leyland Nationals and Leyland Lynxes! The LSs are National 2s formerly on Red Arrow work, refurbished with coach seats and converted to single door. There are no prizes for guessing where the LXs, which also have coach seats, came from! All the 607 buses come from Uxbridge, as before, and carry a new livery with signwriting detailing route points and black window surrounds plus 607 Express lettering on top of LBL corporate livery. Now that's Centrewest for you!



LS503, a former Red Arrow Leyland National 2, has been rebuilt to single door and fitted with coach seats for the 607 Express.

R. J. WATERHOUSE

. . . and X15

Route X15 was converted to one-person Titan operation, as predicted in *Buses* October, from Monday 25 November, but newspapers are still available on the buses. The X15 is now interworked with the new limited-stop D10 which started on the same date. This Monday-Friday only route runs from Liverpool Street station to Leamouth via Canary Wharf. It works every 10min from Liverpool Street only in the morning peak, and every 10min in the opposite direction in the evening peak with a 20min service both ways between the peaks.

Other East London revisions

From the same date as the X15 change the D3 was shortened to run East Ham-Isle of Dogs only, via Canary Wharf, to combat congestion. The 40, which no longer serves Poplar, was diverted at Limehouse to run to Canary Wharf to replace the D3; passengers going on to Shoreditch or Old Street are asked to take the 67 or 78 at Aldgate. Back at the other end the D7 had extra journeys scheduled in the peaks to cope with heavy loadings, from Island Gardens in the mornings and Mile End in the evenings.

The conversion of 241 and 278 to midibus operation (see *Buses* October and November) took place on 23 November. The schoolday Titan journeys are run as 378, not 278S, from Victoria & Albert Dock to Wanstead Park station in the morning and the other way in the evening.

Also on 23 November the 62 was taken over by East London from Ensign Citybus and shortened to run Barking (Gascoigne Estate) to Marks Gate only; between there and Collier Row it was withdrawn due to poor patronage. The 62^A was withdrawn and the 362 extended from Chadwell Heath to Little Heath (Haw Bush) to replace it. The frequency on the 62 is increased to 15min.

The 723X is running again from Stratford to Lakeside shopping centre at Thurrock via Barking, Dagenham Heathway and South Hornchurch on Saturdays until 11 January. It began on 16 November.

And more Docklands changes

The DLR supplementary bus services were discontinued from 7 December and new stage services were introduced. They are designed to strengthen transport links to the City whilst retaining the additional capacity to cater for DLR users in the event of a failure. The routes also take over from the DLR replacement services in the evenings and at weekends.

New route D8 runs Stratford-Isle of Dogs-Island Gardens-Isle of Dogs Asda (for Crossharbour DLR) daily; it is non-stop between Stratford and Bow Church DLR, otherwise all stops. Daytime frequency is 10min. New route D9 is Bank-Tower Hill-Isle of Dogs-Island Gardens-Isle of Dogs Asda, daily, every 10min at weekends and every 20min the rest of the week. Main weekday services are left to the D1 and the new D11, London Bridge (a new link)-Tower Hill-Canary Wharf. With the D1 it is expected to provide a 5min peak and 10min daytime frequency between the City and Docklands. The Mile End DLR bus service was integrated into the 277, which now has a 5min frequency between Canary Wharf and Mile End on Monday-Friday daytime only. Frequency to Highbury and Islington remained the same. The new Scania are used on these routes.



One of the new Alexander-bodied Scania, 513 (J813 HMC) on the Docklands Light Railway replacement service.

R. J. WATERHOUSE

Tender results

The 236 (Finsbury Park-Hackney Wick) has been won by Ensign Citybus from Leaside Buses, the 240 (Golders Green-Edgware) remains with Metroline as does the 266 (Hammersmith-Brent Cross) and the 449 (school journey between Romford and Hornchurch) went to East London. The 452 (school journey, Mitcham-Hook) goes to London General, the D6 (Hackney-Isle of Dogs) to Ensign Citybus from East London and new shoppers' service W10 (Crew's Hill-Enfield), also to Ensign Citybus. Lastly the 726 has been awarded to London Coaches and I look forward to that! London Coaches has made an unusual choice of vehicle for this service, Ikarus Citibus-bodied DAF SB220s, a type also ordered by Grey-Green, although the London Coaches vehicles will have coach seats. All the tenders are for three years apart from the W10 which is for six months. Up for retender are the 51 (Woolwich-Orpington), now operated by Kentish Bus, 57 (Kingston-Streatham Hill), now London United and London Central's 286 (Greenwich-Eltham).

The various events of 23 November resulted in substantial movements around the fleet, with Titans transferred into Brixton to replace DMSs and also into Croydon for the same purpose. Croydon's first Titans were T347/64/5, all ex-Walthamstow, and more followed during November. Leaside has also received its first Titans, with Stamford Hill receiving T297, 312/3/39, though by the time you read this Stamford Hill should have a large Titan allocation. T297, 312/39 plus T356 were all at Barking as a float for air-brake conversions. SR5-7, 9, 12/5/8, 20, 31 and 46 plus MA40 and 90 have been transferred to Chalk Farm for the 46. Ex-London Forest MRL108/15-7/20/5 have all gone to Stamford Brook for the H40 with MRL131

going to West Ham as the first of the allocation for the 241 and 278. MA14-24 have been transferred to Plumstead for the 202.

More new Scania in stock are S12/4/7-21/4/6-9 (J812 HMC etc), with Alexander H47/31F bodywork. S20/1/4/5 are more with the Scania two-speed transmission.

The three H-class Dennis Dominators were formally transferred to London Coaches on 31 October. They are being used on the London Plus tour during the winter. RML2618 has been transferred temporarily to Victoria for the fitting of an experimental Iveco engine and RM342, 648, 1058, 1240, 1324, 1882, 1946 have

been moved into the reserve fleet. OV41 was loaned to Kentish operator Mercury Passenger Services from 22 October to 11 November.

Buses sold are DMS2260/70, 2300/34/57/85/8, 2400/56, 2522. DMS2456 was the bus with the Ogle Design modifications fitted in 1985. D2620/37 and FS28 have gone to the operations department, and are kept at Finchley garage but are normally based at Manor House. Also sold are LS48, 358 and RM1740. Buses to the sales department are OV11/5/7/9-21/4/6/7, 34/5, 42/3/8/9, LS62, RM2097, DMS2267, 2307/72 and D2546/7/68. RM1585, LS117, AP2 and LP1, 5, 6 are in store.

LONDON BUSES
FLEET NEWS

A COOL WELCOME

ANDREW JAROSZ reports on a new competitor in Newcastle, which despite its name has not met with a warm welcome from existing operators

The emergence of a new commercial competitor in Newcastle in mid-October proved to be one of the more controversial and difficult starts that any new company has had to endure. Before launching its new routes, Welcome Passenger Services had to weather an appearance in the High Court in London to face an injunction against its choice of livery and routenumbers, as well as the non-delivery of half of its new fleet that was required for the services.

Welcome grew from a determination by former Tyne & Wear Omnibus staff to return to the streets of Newcastle after their company was bought out by Busways Travel in November 1989 and almost immediately given notice of winding up. TWOC had developed as a separate subsidiary of the Trimdon Group, after introducing competitive services north of the Tyne in August 1987. Its competitive fleet of Bristol LHs had nearly reached the 100 mark, but soon after the sale, all 187 staff were given notice. Led by Harry Stewart, formerly TWOC's Operations Superintendent North, a group of TWOC staff approached CPS haulage of Gateshead for backing and after months of planning it was decided to launch a totally new company with brand new vehicles.

The Welcome concept is one of offering top specification vehicles and hopefully a high quality service. The company ordered 10 long wheelbase Optare Metroriders, and 10 Reeve Burgess Beaver-bodied Renault

S75 midibuses — all fitted to full DiPTAC recommendations and specially downseated with larger entrances and luggage pens. The Metroriders have 29 seats and the Renaults only 28 seats, with the fleet based not far from the original TWOC depot at Saltmeadows Road in Gateshead.

A figure of eight route linking Chapel House and Walker was introduced in October with 18 vehicles operating at 10 minute intervals, in both directions on the loop. This was followed by a link from Newcastle to the Dunston Metrocentre via Gateshead which uses only two vehicles. The Newcastle service has sections of hail & ride, but does not exactly copy any of the Busways routes.

A week before starting up Welcome faced a High Court injunction from Busways against using its yellow fleet livery and route numbers 12 and 40^A (both similar to those of Busways). No immediate action was advised on the use of the livery but the judge did instruct the company to use routenumbers 120 and 400 to minimise passenger confusion.

The planned launch was also disrupted by the non arrival of the Renault S75s, and eight Dodge S56s 'Little Nippers' were hired from South Yorkshire Transport as well as an Optare Metrorider demonstrator.

Busways has defended itself with the usual duplication as well as introducing the 'Q Movers' — street conductresses who try to sell tickets before the opposition arrives.

Welcome is planning an expansion scheme and claims that its aim is to raise vehicle standards and service quality. It believes that supported services which do not warrant the use of a full-size vehicle could be operated at less cost with an approved midibus.

At present both operators are building up to the seasonal rush, but there is the prospect of continued legal action, which could drag on well into 1992, if the two companies do not learn to live alongside each other in the true spirit of competition.

FLEET LIST

J371-80 BNW	Optare MetroRider B29F
J553 NGS,	Renault S75
J225-33 JJR	Plaxton B28F
F291 GNB	Mazda (Made 2 Measure)
	14 seater (reserve vehicle)

Below left

One of the Welcome Optare Metroriders, J379 BNW, waits at Eldon Square with a Scania of City Busways behind on the service with which Welcome is competing.

Below

Pending delivery of its Reeve Burgess-bodied Renaults Welcome had to hire some Dodges from South Yorkshire, including 133 [D133 OWG].

BOTH: ANDREW JAROSZ



As *Buses* has undergone its biggest facelift ever, editor **Stephen Morris** talks to **Ray Stenning**, responsible for the design of the new magazine, to find out a little of the philosophy behind the new look

One of the most daunting things about editing *Buses* is the tremendous depth of feeling readers have for the magazine. Years ago my then local paper, the *Manchester Evening News*, used to describe itself as 'A friend dropping in' and for many this is even more true of *Buses*. Some have had every issue since it started back in 1949 and for many there was something special about the small, unique size of the magazine.

It often seems that it is only five minutes since *Buses* last changed size, yet it is as long ago as July 1980, 11½ years ago, that we last altered the format. Having changed size in 1954, 1964 and 1973 this meant that the familiar 9½in by 7¼in size, far from being 'new fangled', was the longest-running format the magazine has had since it started!

Buses was the only magazine in the Ian Allan stable, indeed one of the very few magazines anywhere now, that was smaller than A4, and although we always coped with the production problems that this brought it seemed that change might be inevitable one day. But it was really the growing realisation that the old size wasn't doing justice to the material the magazine contained and that it had 'had its day' which provided the impetus for change rather than any production reasons.

One person who had particularly strong ideas about *Buses* was the well-known bus and coach industry designer Ray Stenning of Best Impressions. Scarcely would a new issue of *Buses* come out than Ray would be on the phone; he is one person on whom you can depend to be refreshingly honest, and after pointing out some of the good points of the issue you knew there would be sting in the tail. 'You know that feature on such-and-such; well it might have been nicer if you'd just done this . . .', and before you knew where you were Ray had verbally redesigned the entire magazine. So when the decision was taken to go for a new format, I felt I had to call Ray's bluff and get him involved. I was not disappointed with the result.

Ray had been a reader of *Buses* since he was 12 and knowing the magazine, knowing buses and coaches and knowing about design he too felt uniquely qualified for the job. In the 1960s and 1970s, he told me, *Buses* looked 'quite good from a magazine design point of view', but magazine design has moved on drastically since those times, in all

sectors. Thus *Buses* was beginning to fall behind the times visually and was in danger of looking a little stilted.

Ray feels very strongly that as a magazine is method of communication then its design has to communicate what the magazine is all about. *Buses*, he felt, needed a cleaner, sharper look; it needed to be taken more seriously, and make people proud to buy it and to be seen with it. This applied equally to those working in the industry and to enthusiasts themselves who are becoming ever more sophisticated.

It is often the fault of a magazine editor to wish to cram as much as possible into the magazine and with its smaller pages *Buses* was looking rather crowded. However Ray's approach has been to let in more 'air', as he says, to 'let the layouts and pages breathe'. At the same time he wished to tidy up some anomalies which had crept in over the

years and to give the magazine a more logical flow to the contents. He likens his approach to a three-course meal, with a starter of general news items, a main course formed of features and then all the Fleet News sections as dessert.

We hope you like the result. Ray has a formidable record in the bus and coach industry for his livery, image and publicity designs, encompassing companies such as London Buses, for which he has produced publicity material and the Streetline image, London & Country, Speedlink Airport Services, Kentish Bus & Coach, Scottish Citylink, City of Oxford, Thamesdown

Transport, Burnley & Pendle, Boro'line as well as smaller concerns such as Bakers of Weston super Mare and Warrens of Ticehurst. He has won major awards for his work, the latest being an international award for some of his publicity material presented by the American magazine *Bus Ride*. His designs are characterised by a simplicity and cleanliness of line which we think have done much to enhance the appearance of *Buses*.

As far as the new-look *Buses* is concerned you'll still find all your favourite features, but hopefully you'll be able to find them a bit more easily and also find them easier on the eye!

DESIGN AND THE DESIGNER

We look at the new look BUSES



Ray Stenning (left) and examples of his publicity and livery designs.



OPTARE'S SPECTRA

Optare's new double-decker made its debut in October. Is it really a born-again Metrobus or something more suited to the 1990s?

It was back in 1989 that Optare bought the rights to produce the Metrobus following the demise of Metro Cammell Weymann. It had acquired the rights to manufacture the successful Metrorider midibus the previous year, and wasted little time in injecting some of its own expertise into an improved product which appeared at Coach & Bus '89 in October 1989. Given the close similarity of the Optare Metrorider to its MCW predecessor it was not unreasonable to imagine that the Metrobus would also emerge again as essentially the same product as had gone before, with a few 'Optare-isations', such as a bit more style and attention to detail, maybe drawing on MCW's putative Mark 3 Metrobus project. However the fact that the purchase of the Metrobus design was joint with DAF, with whom Optare had already developed its aluminium-bodied Delta, indicated that the revised bus would be something a little different. The fact that Optare subsequently joined the United Bus consortium in May

1990 was confirmation that DAF Bus was likely to concentrate its group research and development facilities on designing a new-generation chassis.

The new Optare double-decker was to be two years in development, and not surprisingly in that time there was very little left of the old Metrobus. Indeed when preliminary information was released about the new bus it was not at all obvious why DAF and Optare had bought the Metrobus design and production rights, as the new model was so totally different from its predecessor. The basic concept was similar, in that it was a complete, semi-integral double-decker though with a distinctly separate underframe which could technically be bodied by other manufacturers, though allowing the operator able to deal directly with just one supplier rather than with a chassis builder and a body builder. Like the Metrobus the new bus is available with Voith

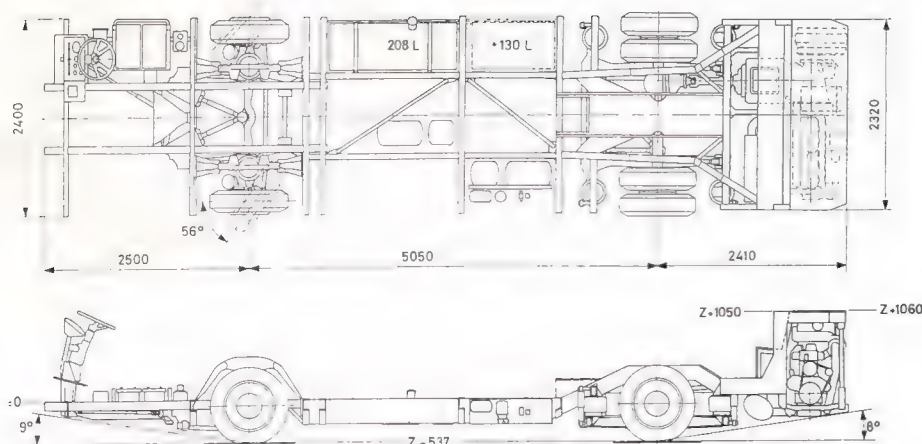
transmission, though unlike its predecessor ZF transmission is standard in most cases. The H-frame for the rear suspension was much the same and the use of a GKN hub reduction rear axle also showed some similarity to the MCW product. The axle shares the same low profile as that used by MCW on the lowheight version of the Metrobus, which was built for Yorkshire Traction, though it is to the same rating as that used in three-axle Metrobuses built for Hong Kong. And although the body construction is totally different and the new product is much more stylish, there is a hint of the Metrobus in its overall profile.

Optare in fact had gained a good deal of expertise through acquiring the Metrobus and at least the old MCW model gave the company a starting point. It enabled Optare to discover the strengths of the Metrobus, and build on them, and also to discover its weaknesses and address them.

Reading 701 (MRD 1), the first Optare Spectra

PICTURES BY ANDREW JAROSZ





Although the Spectra, as the new double-decker was named in time for Coach & Bus '91 at the NEC in October, is based on a new DAF Bus chassis, the DB250, there is a lot of similarity between its new chassis and the SB220 base of the Delta. The forward part of the chassis is identical to the single-decker, complete with the unusual swing link front suspension. However the new bus shares the instrument panel of Leyland-DAF's 90-series trucks. The frame is quite low in overall height and is completely flat forward of the rear axle, with shallow flat-topped fuel tanks outside the frame in the wheelbase. A 208litre (45gallon) fuel tank is standard, though a second 130litre (28½gallon) tank can also be fitted in the next bay.

Naturally the rear end of the chassis is completely different from the SB220, with a vertical transverse engine rather than the horizontal in-line unit of the single-decker. The engine is one of the more intriguing features of the new bus; one of the strong selling points of the Metrobus had been its inclusion of the 'busman's favourite' engine, the Gardner 6LXB, and, latterly, the increasingly-popular Cummins L10. However it would be contrary to DAF Bus's usual philosophy to offer rival engines, and the Spectra is available only with a DAF engine. 'After all, no-one asks Scania to fit a Gardner', reasons Russell Richardson, managing director of Optare and UK chief executive of United Bus. However the DAF engine fitted is the cause of some speculation as it is not the expected 11.6litre unit which has become well-known in existing bus and coach applications. Instead it is a new 9-litre unit, turbocharged and intercooled to give 200kW (268hp) at a rather fast 2,400rpm and 950Nm (700lbf ft) torque, again at a rather fast 1,500rpm, and featuring piston cooling. One of the key features of the new engine is its low emission levels, with nitrogen oxide reduced to less than 9 grammes per kilowatt/hour, which meets known future European emissions regulations.

The design of the driveline is broadly similar to the Metrobus too, with a tidy arrangement. The gearbox is driven via a 90° angle drive, close coupled to the engine, and is thus in line with the prop shaft which in turn can drive in a straight line forward into the offset compact diff of the hub reduction axle. This arrangement also has the benefit that the diff housing

does not intrude into the gangway space, allowing a flat gangway to the rear of the bus. On the Metrobus there was an 80° angle drive driven by a short driveshaft from the engine, with an 80° drive into the rear axle via the gearbox.

There is a choice of gearboxes for different applications and an unusual feature of the Spectra is that different transmissions and speed limiters are used to give different top speeds, rather than having a choice of final drive ratios. Thus although the vehicle is available in different versions offering top speeds of between 50mph, for normal city use, and 68mph for intercity work, the final drive remains the same on all models at 4.7:1. Initially it was announced that three gearbox options were available. These were the ZF 4HP500 four-speed unit for city work, with the five-speed 5HP500 for an Interurban model. The latter transmission would allow a top speed of 62mph, though a speed limiter is fitted to hold speed back to 60mph thus avoiding the requirement for items such as seatbelts, crash pads and antilock braking. The no holds barred Intercity model has the Voith D854.2 four-speed overdrive unit, giving a top speed of 68mph, and in this application anti-lock brakes are standard. Additionally the Voith D851.2 three-speed unit has now been made available as an option on the Citybus model.

Suspension is full air, with two bellows and two double-acting shock absorbers at the front and four of each mounted outboard on the H-frame at the rear. Drum brakes have non-asbestos linings.

In addition to the three levels of performance there are other options. Firstly dual door is available as well as single door, and to overcome the inherent weakness of dual-door models an additional cross member is fitted to the chassis behind the front wheels to give extra strength. Secondly there is a choice of heights, a full-height 4.32m (14ft 2in), which despite being slightly below the full height of some double-decks gives impressive headroom on both decks, and a low-height 4.17m (13ft 8in), without recourse to a dropped-centre rear axle. Otherwise overall dimensions are 10m by 2.5m, with a wheelbase of 5.05m, giving a maximum seating capacity of 81 in single-door configuration. The luxurious Reading vehicle shown at the NEC was a full-height single-door 75-seater. There are also plans

The DAF DB250 chassis.

for a three-axle version, with the Hong Kong market in mind.

As was expected the Spectra follows the tradition set by the Delta of using the Alusuisse system of construction. This is a Swiss system of bolted aluminium extrusions giving a lightweight, strong and corrosion resistant structure, all bolted, making for easy repairs. It was developed over 20 years ago by Swiss Aluminiums and is licensed for construction in 15 countries worldwide. Wrights of Ballymena first introduced the system to the UK on its Contour coach body and holds the licence for Northern Ireland. Optare introduced heavy-duty extrusions on the Delta in 1989 and holds the licence for the rest of the UK. It has the advantage of being a well-proven system which can be adapted to a variety of purposes. Part of the Alusuisse structure involves radiussed corner pieces, which gives rise to the radiussed window pans. This cuts across what had become the fashion, with square-cornered windows, influenced by the rise in bonded windows, though the good looks of the Delta meant that it was not a slave to fashion, and the same is true of the Spectra. In both cases the radiussed windows actually complement the gentle rounding of the style and make a virtue of a necessity. Thus the Spectra has conventional rubber-mounted glazing, and indeed there is something of a reaction to bonded glazing amongst bus operators anyway who suffer more window breakages than coach operators and cannot afford the downtime involved in replacing bonded glass. This is less of a consideration for coaches, where bonded glazing is now nigh-on universal.

Panelling is in aluminium and although there are no visible outside straps or rivets panels can be detached from outside. Visually one of the more interesting aspects of the bus is the lack of a rear window. This is for a number of reasons, not least to give a clear area at the back of the bus for livery application or advertising. It also avoids any recesses at the rear which are difficult to clean. Internally there is a full-depth bulkhead between the passengers and the engine compartment, again avoiding a dirt trap and also improving the passenger environment by reducing internal noise. There are high level secondary brake lights/indicators at the rear.

Passenger accessibility has been a priority and a basic DiPTAC package comes as standard. In addition to the flat floor throughout, the radiator is at the rear (another departure from Metrobus practice), so it does not take up any entrance space and Optare has fitted the widest door it can.

In terms of styling Optare has aimed for a timeless design, and with its clean lines, lack of fuss and pleasing shape it would appear to have succeeded. There are deep windows on both decks and large, single curvature one-piece screens on both decks which look very attractive and also look rather expensive. Internally too the vehicle is stylish; the prototype for Reading had full soft trim and a coach-like interior which



some felt was 'over the top', but certainly moved double-decker designs into a new era in terms of passenger comfort and ambience. No doubt more spartan interiors will follow on more basic models; Reading has a requirement for dual-purpose-type double-deckers and thus the vehicle shown at the NEC was quite lavishly specified.

Optare is building a pre-production batch, most of which are now spoken for. As announced at Coach & Bus '91 Reading is taking the first three, and has an option for a further three in each of the next two years. After seeing the Spectra at the show East Yorkshire confirmed an order for one which will be evaluated as a forerunner to a new generation of double-deckers. Two vehicles will be built as demonstrators. The first for the UK market is now nearing completion and another demonstrator will go to Eindhoven to be targetted at the European market. London Buses will take two, including the first dual-door example, and has already placed a very useful order for 20 vehicles to be delivered during 1992, enabling Optare to start up mainstream production straightaway. These will all be dual-door, but it is not known whereabouts in London Buses they will go.

For all its virtues the MCW Metrobus was a fairly basic vehicle in terms of styling and passenger appeal. The Spectra is in a different league, and is scarcely recognisable as the successor to the Metrobus line. As an offshoot of a mainstream commercial vehicle manufacturer DAF Bus can call on greater engineering and development resources than a more specialist manufacturer like MCW could and the new product promises much. The new engine is an unknown quantity, and the lack of a Cummins or Gardner option could well be a turn-off to some existing Metrobus operators, and Optare, like everyone else will have to wait for an upturn in the market before it is able to realise the full potential of its new model. However the ability of the vehicle to turn itself to basic urban work, limited-stop trunk operation or even short-haul motorway express work within a standardised package will be useful. It shares much chassis componentry with the Delta, and the Delta, Vecta and Spectra share the same Alusuisse body system as well as similar electrical and interior components, giving the potential for useful standardisation for fleets with a mix of double and single-deckers and midibuses. Like the Delta and some of Optare's smaller products the Spectra is a bus which stands out from the crowd and will thus give operators a useful competitive edge.

STEPHEN MORRIS



Optare has always made an effort to make its bus interiors look rather more inviting than others. This is the top deck of the rather luxurious Reading Spectra.

The Spectra has no rear window downstairs and high-level repeater brake and indicator lamps.

EXPRESS

FROM A TO B

National Express, Britain's biggest operator of express services has undergone a change in ownership recently.

STUART RENDER brings us up to date on the company's activities.



The months following the introduction of the 1980 Transport Act and the subsequent deregulation of coach services resulted in a frenzy of activity from the nation's coach operators. New services sprang up throughout the country, promising lower fares and better deals for coach travellers. Although the whole country was available to the operators of these new services it was perhaps hardly surprising to see London emerge as the destination for almost every one of the new routes. Now, over 10 years later, only a small number of those new services remain,

the others, for a number of reasons, having long since disappeared in favour of the country's leading operator of express coach services, National Express.

The history of National Express in the lead up to deregulation and the way in which it responded to the threat of competition has been well documented elsewhere. Suffice to say that the subsequent lowering of fares, the improvements to the service network and the introduction of 'Rapide' saw annual passenger figures rise dramatically from around 8million before 1980, peak around

15million and settle back to around 13million today.

Before we look at some of the developments affecting the network it is useful to take a brief look at just what has happened to the ownership of the company since the privatisation of the National Bus Company. As the company responsible for the network of NBC express coach services,

National Expressliner H538 SEO in the fleet of Shaw Hadwin heads south on the M6 on service 570 from Blackpool to London.

National Express Ltd was subject to a management buy-out from NBC on 17 March 1988. The new company set up to acquire National Express was known as National Express Holdings Ltd, with National Express Ltd operating as a subsidiary of this new parent company.

On 23 July 1991 National Express Holdings was itself the subject of a takeover by a consortium of City-based institutions led by the Drawlane Transport Group. The name given to the company formed by this consortium is now National Express Group Ltd and it is headed up by Chairman and Chief Executive Ray McEnhill, also the Chairman of Drawlane. Today, National Express is a subsidiary of National Express Group. Other Group subsidiaries include Speedlink Airport Services, recently transferred from Drawlane, Eurolines, coach dealer Carlton PSV and operating subsidiary Express Travel Services, the Perth-based company formed out of the merger of Birmingham-based Roadmaster Travel Services and Perth-based Tayside Travel Services. There are also two joint venture companies, Dorset Travel Services and Trathens Travel Services, own jointly by National Express and the companies' respective managements.

Scottish developments

The situation in Scotland has also changed dramatically over the last few years. In July 1989, National Express acquired the

express coach services of Perth-based Stagecoach Holdings. Included in the deal were the busy routes linking Scotland with London, the first time that National Express had ever operated on that particular route. A separate branding, Caledonian Express, was introduced to highlight these new services and all Scottish-based vehicles were painted in white and blue instead of the usual red, white and blue. Following the introduction of Caledonian Express, the route network within Scotland expanded considerably. The new routes to London along with the substantial increase in the choice of services to destinations throughout England and Wales were welcomed by coach travellers throughout Scotland. Over 500 Caledonian Express agents were appointed to sell the full range of tickets and other travel products. For a time, it even became possible to travel by National Express from Thurso and Wick all the way through to Penzance (a journey made by the author one bank holiday in 1990). Today almost all Caledonian Express coach services are operated by Express Travel Services from their bases in Perth and Birmingham.

Other developments

Elsewhere on the network, other developments have been taking place. The Coachway concept, successfully introduced at Milton Keynes in April 1989, was extended to Reading. A Coachway enables towns that may not have a particularly good

coach service to be linked into the main network without causing undue delay to existing coach travellers. Milton Keynes Coachway is situated just off the M1 at junction 14 and is served by coaches heading to and from the Midlands, the North of England and Scotland. Refurbished during 1991, the Coachway, which now offers a cafeteria, toilets and a booking office, is linked to Central Milton Keynes by a dedicated minibus service. Reading Coachway, opened in 1991, is situated close to junction 12 on the M4. The stop, alongside the Calcot SavaCentre, is now served by selected departures on coach services to South Wales, Bristol and the West Country and is connected to the centre of Reading by frequent local bus services.

The popularity of the network of airport services continues to grow with the introduction, at the beginning of the winter, of a new 425 Rapide Airlink service linking the North East and Yorkshire with Heathrow and Gatwick Airports. This new service is operated by North East-based Durham Travel Services using some of the latest Neoplan Skyliner coaches and has reduced the journey time from the North East to the airports by over three hours.

The development of Rapide

As mentioned earlier, the introduction of the Rapide concept was one of the main reasons for the initial growth in the popularity of coach travel during the 1980s. Rapide services can usually be spotted by their characteristic 500-series routenumbers although airport services 425, 625 and 825 and Caledonian Express services between London and Scotland have also been upgraded to Rapide standard. The very fact that serving teas and coffees on twisting roads can be hazardous to your health, never mind your lap, has always restricted Rapide to those services that include long non-stop sections. However, Rapide is now over 10 years old and the company is currently looking at the whole issue of both off and on-coach facilities to see where improvements can be made with a view to a relaunch in 1992/93. Coaches operating on Rapide services must, amongst a long list of requirements, carry a hostess or steward, a range of light refreshments, reclining seats and a toilet. The specification also calls for a high-floor vehicle, such as the Paramount 3500, as research has shown that coach travellers appreciate the improved vantage point offered by the coach compared with a car or a train.



H556 WTS is an Expressliner, seen at London Victoria, in Caledonian Express livery. The Stagecoach fleenames, previously carried aft of the entrance, have gone. Expressliners have no rear window and the double N symbol embossed on the rear.

TIM CARTER

Double-deckers are still used on busy National Express services. C179 KHG is a Plaxton 4000-bodied Neoplan, used by Crosville Wales last year. It is seen at Digbeth, Birmingham.

The National Expressliner

Most people, when asked, are surprised to discover that out of the total fleet of liveried coaches only nine are actually legally owned by National Express Ltd, these being operated by Express Travel Services. The remainder, around 600, are owned by local coach operators. These vehicles, by necessity, represent a wide range of different makes and whilst this makes for variety it is not an ideal situation for the customer and the operator. The view has been long held that customers should be able to expect a similar standard of quality and on-board facilities every time they travelled by coach. Pursuing the idea, National Express entered discussions with Plaxtons coming up with the now ubiquitous National Expressliner. The first coach (NXI 9001) entered service in March 1989 and today there are around 150 in regular main-line service on the coach network. Customer reaction to the Expressliner has been extremely favourable and operators have found the coach to be a willing workhorse. Thanks to the introduction of side-loading luggage lockers the days of having to fish around in the boot with a long pole are fast disappearing, a blessing for drivers on cross-country multi-stop routes. The introduction of the new range of Plaxton coaches will inevitably mean changes for the Expressliner as production of the Paramount comes to an end. Discussions between National Express and Plaxtons have already taken place although at

present no decision on the future of 'Expressliner 2' has been announced.

For the most part, the successful operation of the network relies on the common sense and professionalism of the drivers, hostesses and stewards. On the rare occasions when something goes wrong, they have the back-up of the national Operations Control Centre based at National Express's Birmingham headquarters. Operational for 24 hours a day, the OCC is able to sort out breakdowns, overloads and other emergencies. This winter, 55 operators are booked to cover the scheduled timetable with the complexity of coach diagrams often resulting in coaches based in one part of the country operating on a route many hundreds of miles away. For example, a typical three-day diagram worked by Plymouth-based Trathens will see a coach leave Totnes for London at 09.40 on service 501, arriving in London at 15.10, then leaving London at 16.30 on service 540 to Bury. On day 2 the coach travels light to Keighley to make the 11.45 service 561 to London, returning to Keighley as the 18.00 service 561. On day 3 the coach leaves Bury at 09.15 as service 540 to London making the 18.00 service 501 departure to Brixham. Trathens crews based in Paignton and Rochdale cover this diagram between them, although one can imagine the problems that could arise should any part of this intensive working fail to operate as scheduled. Where to 'drop' the toilet, fuelling, and washing are all factors that must be taken into account, factors of

which the customer will be blissfully unaware.

All coach operators working under contract to National Express are expected to adhere to a strict set of working conditions that affect both the vehicles and staff. A failure to do so may result in financial penalties and the eventual loss of the contract if the fault is not rectified. National Express provides regular training courses for staff from contracted operators and this has played a major role in increasing the quality of the service offered to customers. This increase was reflected in the figures released in the National Consumer Council report for 1991 which showed that 85% of all people asked said that they were satisfied with the overall service they received from long distance coach services, an increase of 9% from 1990.

The future

We have only been able to touch on a few of the developments affecting National Express today. Problems of increasing traffic congestion and the development of city centre coach terminals are just two of the topics that will become even more important over the coming year.

Competition from other coach operators, and from British Rail, will continue to affect the company. In response National Express will continue to ensure that quality and value for money remain the watchwords for the nineties.



up to £200-worth of travel by NATIONAL EXPRESS

To celebrate the first new-look BUSES we are offering the opportunity to win a free ticket for two people to travel anywhere in mainland Britain on the National Express network (and back!). . . And you don't need to come back the same way as you went out.

You could for instance sample a journey from Scotland to Cornwall, going one way via Birmingham and coming back via London . . . or anywhere else you fancy!

Second Prize

A two-year subscription to the new-look BUSES

Third Prize

A one-year subscription to the new-look BUSES

Just answer the following questions:

- 1 What is the service number of the Caledonian Express Rapide service linking London with Inverness?
- 2 Where was London's coach station immediately before the opening of Victoria Coach Station?
- 3 What is the name of the network of European express coach services that links the UK with around 200 destinations throughout Europe?
- 4 What is the passenger seating capacity (not including the toilet!) of an Expressliner coach fitted out to Rapide specification?
- 5 What is the number of the longest daily National Express service and where does it start and finish?

TIE BREAKER

Estimate the mileage of the longest daily National Express service.
Answers to NATIONAL EXPRESS COMPETITION, BUSES,
Ian Allan Publishing, Terminal House, Shepperton,
Middlesex TW17 8AS by 15 January 1992.

RULES

1. The competition is open to all readers of BUSES with the exception of employees of Ian Allan and National Express.
2. Journeys must be taken by 25 October 1992, and tickets will **not** be valid for travel on Bank Holidays. Journeys may not involve a ferry crossing. The return route need not be the same as the outward journey and the return may be undertaken at any time up to 25 October 1992.

3. Entries will be checked by the editor of BUSES and his decision will be final. In the event of a tie the nearest estimate of the mileage referred to in the tiebreaker will be taken into account. If this still produces a tie then the first correct entry drawn out will be adjudged the winner. No correspondence regarding the competition will be entered into. No alternative prize is available.
4. The closing date of the competition is 15 January 1992 and prize winners will be notified in writing shortly afterwards.

Midland Red North

JOHN ALDRIDGE visits Cannock and finds Drawlane subsidiary Midland Red North, which now stretches up into Cheshire and across into mid-Wales, is a very different entity from that which emerged from the split-up of the monolithic Midland Red 10 years ago



The old Midland Red covered a huge — and some would say unmanageable — area until it split into all those unimaginatively-named separate companies back in 1981. Since then different parts of the old empire have fallen into different groupings, with Midland Red North becoming part of the Drawlane empire.

Midland Red North has continued to flourish and grow, both in fleet size and territory. While it will never be like the old BMMO it has continued to spread, particularly to the north and north-west. It took over the Crosville operations at Crewe a couple of years ago, now Midland Redline, and has recently gained a piece of Crosville Wales at Oswestry, which has become Cambrian Midland Red. Indeed the company for some time has used different fleetnames for different areas of its operation; Chaserider is used in the company's home area around Cannock and Stafford, with Tellus for Telford and Wellington, Mercian around Tamworth and for services into the West Midlands area and Hotspur for Shrewsbury, names which originated with the MAP schemes of the early-1980s.

The Crewe operation has been reorganised and revamped and even now is showing month-on-month revenue increases. It is too soon to say much about Cambrian Midland Red, but a look at Crewe may serve as an indicator as to what might happen. Money has been spent on improvements to Crewe bus station (including, it is said, cleaning the floor for the first time) and garage, and on the vehicles themselves.

Like many takeovers these days Crewe was a fairly short-notice job. There didn't seem to be any decent maps of the town, nor, for that matter, any comprehensive bus timetables. And, if you are a newcomer, even maps do not give you much feel for a place. They may show you where the houses are, but what type of houses, what density, what potential traffic? Midland Red North decided there was only one quick way to find out and got some aerial photographs taken. That revenue is still

rising shows that the company got a good grip on matters.

Since then takeovers have generally been on a smaller scale. That of Staffordian Travel, once known as Greatrex, involved no vehicles but local services on which three were used. MRN needs two, having undertaken some fine tuning, rescheduling and linking with existing workings. More recent is the takeover of Happy Days' bus operation from 20 October last, with three Plaxton Derwent-bodied Scania's, a Mercedes 811 and a Ford Transit. The Scania's are moving to Telford to run routes 2 and 12, which are clockwise and anti-clockwise versions of the same circuit, along with Dennis Falcons. The MRN fleet now contains six of the ten Falcons bought by London & Country, incidentally, and the operator would be quite happy to have the others or those bought by North Western!

The two routes mentioned run from Telford town centre out round various housing estates which were planned to have busways linking them. The busways were built, but not for buses or vehicular traffic; rather they became pedestrian walkways so the buses follow tortuous routes in and out of the the various estates. There is competition too, from Shearings, so it adds up to modern vehicles running tightly-timed services with a high average speed, a high mileage but not awfully good pence-per-mile figures. Telford's 100,000 population is spread out in clusters over an area of about 30 square miles; in contrast similar-sized Derby is contained within about 10 square miles. Competition in Derby saw Midland Red North selling its fleet to Derby City Transport, a result which MRN does not see as unsatisfactory.

Other competitive measures have been seen from time to time. At one stage MRN had some orange-liveried Leyland Leopards labelled Hurley Village Bus for this, but competition from others has rather moved away from Staffordshire, whose smaller aggressive operators now seem to be focussing on West Midlands Travel.

One the whole things have settled down. Managing director Chris Hilditch and

operations manager C. J. Watts drily observe that changes for some part or other of the territory now come about every three months instead of every three days. But there is still scope for the odd new minibus service, for linking routes and other improvements.

Revenue collection and potential is taken very seriously, particularly in current times. If you cannot raise more money from a route, maybe you should cut costs by using slightly smaller vehicles. As a rule of thumb seven buses an hour would be the optimum for passengers on town routes, and probably best for revenue too, except that it creates a timetable which no-one can remember. MRN thus settles for six, except in a place like Shrewsbury where time does not appear to matter like it does in Telford, and people seem happy with four buses an hour!

On a more serious note, although the amount of change may have slowed, the speed at which it might be necessary has not. Notice of successful tenderers is usually given about two weeks before the services have to be taken over. Different authorities have different ideas on vehicle size too and if you are fine-tuning your operations for maximum profit you need quite a wide selection of vehicles. They will be spread around quite a number of garages, some quite small, and some outstations.

MRN sees buses not so much as types, but as capacities, and regards it as essential to have a spread through the fleet. At the moment for example it could probably do with some more 23 to 25-seat midibuses or some stretched versions. With this range the company can respond quickly to tendered demands and can also fine-tune individual routes.

There are just two Dennis Darts in the fleet at the moment, a short one, 8.5m with 35 seats and a long one, 9.8m and 40 seats. More would be nice. Larger ones for example could downsize some of the Leyland National-operated routes to retain the same frequency and offer lower fuel

Seen in Birmingham is Midland Red North Metroliner 1992 (SNU 122) It came within the Drawlane group from Shamrock & Rambler and was new as A120 KBA.
A. SUGDEN

Midland Red North has been having ex-London & Country Berkhof-bodied 12m Leyland Tigers rebodied as service buses by East Lancs, all within the Drawlane family. C141 SPB was new as BTL41 and is seen at Rugeley.
A. SWAIN

Below right:
So far unique to Midland Red North, two East Lancs-bodied Dennis Darts are in use on Midland Redline services in Crewe.
M. FOWLER

Bottom right:
An MRN rarity on rail replacement work at Wilmslow is this Alexander-bodied Metrobus, one of three ex-Kelvin Scottish.
JOHN YOUNG



consumption, maintenance costs and a more attractive vehicle.

Mark 1 Leyland Nationals are getting a bit long in the tooth now, but are still useful tools nonetheless. Eight of those with Midland Red North (including two ex-Crosville and three ex-Alder Valley via a dealer) have Gardner engines. Chris Hilditch is interested in the East Lancs National Greenway project and considers that if it gives another 10 years' life it could be worthwhile. He quite liked the vehicle at the Birmingham show, with the mechanical improvements, retrim and better entrance step but would want to retain the original front and rear windscreens. Such vehicles would come in useful for tendered services for Centro, where DiPTAC is a requirement.

DiPTAC is in fact a headache as different local authorities want different specs, some of which actually conflict with each other. Some authorities, fuelled no doubt by internal lobby groups, are quite aggressive about DiPTAC too.

From a Drawlane point of view the aim is to buy new vehicles or bodies which meet both DiPTAC and LRT Schedule X for London operations. The two are not entirely compatible and with DiPTAC alone Centro has one requirement, Cheshire County Council another. For example some insist on palm-operated bell pushes, while others will not accept vehicles with them.

No feature on MRN would be complete without mention of its enthusiastic rebodding of early Leyland Tiger coaches as buses. Surprisingly a standard MRN Tiger bus (with East Lancs body) is not far short of the DiPTAC specification. Even odder, perhaps, MRN's Dennis Dominators which have high frames but lowheight bodies 'walk through all the DiPTAC requirements'.

The Tiger is a 'mighty vehicle', says Chris Hilditch. 'We see it as a multi-role combat bus which can waltz along on inter-town routes but is OK on a motorway too'. All have speed limiters, incidentally. MRN's original rebodied Tigers (there are also a few built new with Duple bus bodies

January 1992



in the fleet) were built on 11m chassis that originally had ECW B51 coach bodies. The main body structure on these was fine, but many of the components and fittings were cheap and troublesome, so the vehicles were available at an attractive written-down price which made rebodding a practical proposition.

A second batch is all but completed, this time on ex-London & Country 12m chassis which had distinctive Berkhof bodies. With the current state of the coach market these were not highly sought-after, and indeed the higher-spec ones were standing at a lower value in the books. The steel-framed Berkhof bodies were pretty heavy too. MRN has one route with a spectacularly low low bridge and its original batch of rebodied Tigers were designed to go under it. The road dips under the bridge to gain what headroom it can and that meant fresh thoughts for MRN's second batch of Tigers, with their greater length, to lose a little more height. So the Mk II version has a scalloped floor, slightly higher under the seats than in the gangway. The opening rooflights had to be eliminated and that all saves the vital 3in height. To compensate for the lack of ventilation tinted glass is used and there are plenty of hopper ventilators. Lowering the gangway floor also enables 3in to be taken off the height of the top entrance step.

The second batch of Tigers seat 61, all on two-plus-two seating, and can also carry standees, 24 of them, a mighty vehicle indeed. Such buses are ideal for the new Wellington-Stafford service which begins on 6 January. It links what were two separate routes and saves a bus.

Above this very useful capacity are the double-deckers, mainly Olympians ('another half-dozen would be very useful'), one remaining Bristol VRT ('a maintenance engineer's nightmare'), the recent Dennis Dominators and three Metrobuses. These last have Alexander low-height alloy bodies so do not have the body structure problems of some Mk 1 Metrobuses. They were a part-exchange deal though Ensign which took three MCW Metroliner double-deck coaches in exchange.

The coaches had been a bit of a disaster, and continued to be a maintenance problem even when much money had been spent bringing them up to scratch. They were



Top: Midland Red North has a number of smaller minibuses. Unusual in the fleet is this Ford Transit, 191 (H191 EHA), seen at Stafford.

JOHN MILNES

Above left: The Midland Red fleet proper never had Bristol VRTs, but several have appeared more recently in the former constituent fleets. Midland Red North gained some by its takeover of part of Crosville; this one is on a Midland Redline service in Chester.

S. J. KELLY

Left: Though less emphasis is now being placed on local fleetnames, at one time they predominated. In NBC days Leyland Olympian 1906 (EEH 606Y) carries just Chaserider fleetnames.

A. PEARSON

used on a route into Birmingham with some motorway running but the body structure did not seem to like the twists and turns on Birmingham's ordinary roads, and the engines weren't very happy either.

Dominators, Metrobuses and Olympians might not seem to have a lot in common but they all have the legendary Gardner engine. And comparing Metrobus and Dominator for example other common parts include Voith gearboxes, diffs, steering boxes, hubs, stub axles, brakes and parts of the air system. One feature which is not liked, and would not be accepted again, is the suspension system on the Dominator which, although air, uses springs for location; the springs and associated parts wear more quickly than on a fully-sprung vehicle and create more maintenance work. This is something of an anomaly, because one way MRN (and many others) have been able to cut maintenance costs is by going to air suspension, and also asbestos-free brake linings.

Chassis at MRN are not, then, standardised, but types used have many common components. These days you have to have a good eye for a deal or a bargain and one just made is the exchange of two Berkhof-bodied Tigers for four Tiger chassis with less desirable bodywork from a local operator. All four will get new East Lincs bus bodies — four chassis for the price of two.

East Lincs is the key to standardisation. There are already nearly 50 of its bodies in the fleet and they have, to Chris Hilditch, the enormous merit of being very standardised in terms of parts. Whether double-deck, large single-decker or Dart

they have the same windows, the same seats, the same pillars, the same mirrors and the same moquette. The moquette incidentally can be found on about 100 MRN buses in all.

We mentioned the smaller garages and outstations earlier. These can't (and shouldn't) carry big stocks of spares and have to be staffed by 'jacks-of-all-trades' who can do most of the minor chassis and body repairs. Not all spares are bought new; MRN buys some vehicles for dismantling for spares and is sure this is cost-effective even after taking into account the labour involved. A non-runner Leyland National for example can yield up to £8,000-worth of spares. So, as well as the odd accident-damaged Leyland National from the MRN fleet, others are bought from time to time, for example from London & Country. Looking years ahead Tigers could be fine for similar treatment.

A close eye needs to be kept on vehicle costs these days, and with a multiplicity of suppliers of spares a watch has to be kept on parts that fail under warranty. A user-friendly computer system is used; it is easy to key-in information and is easy subsequently to study what has been done and spent on each vehicle and when. Chris Hilditch points out that it is the economies in using secondhand parts and general good housekeeping that provides the money to buy computers and other modern business adjuncts.

The fleet looks smart too. 'Since acquisition by Drawlane' says Chris Hilditch 'we've quietly been putting back quality into the fleet. The standard of maintenance is better that it has been for

some time, we've been replacing assets and we have also worked very hard on the quality of service'. The undertaking is in a better financial state than it was too.

One unusual aspect in the drive for quality is the use of what the company terms quality auditors. Though their uniforms are badged 'inspector' they are more than just that. They report on anything they see and a copy of their reports goes to the garage manager concerned. A second copy is collated and followed up to check on action taken, reasons and anything else of relevance. Most of it is pretty down-to-earth stuff; wrongly-issued tickets, incorrect destination displayed, dirty cab, but the important thing is that it is all followed up. This avoids the usual irritations to the passenger of buses with torn upholstery, dirty windows or a perpetual lack of destination information.

Quite apart from an improvement in general standards it means all staff are encouraged to take a pride in their work and do things properly because they know something will be done about it, whatever it is. It won't be lost, forgotten or fudged over.

And that alone puts Midland Red North ahead of many fleets.

Midland Red North has had a number of new vehicles since privatisation including the first East Lincs-bodied Leyland Olympians to have lowheight bodywork. 1916 (G916 LHA) is seen in Nuneaton.

FASTLINE PROMOTIONS LTD



When, as a small boy, I used to visit Winchester there were several things that used to strike me about the green King Alfred buses that were native to the area. One striking thing was, of course, the regal likeness of the King himself on their side panels; another thing I liked was the strange sound of some of the places shown on the destination screens: Weeke Estate, Sparsholt, Oliver's Battery and many more. Another thing which to me was strange (coming from a strictly Tilling ECW-bodied Bath) was the asymmetrical guttering over the upstairs back window of the all-Leyland Titans. And finally I could not keep my eyes off the many advertisements for Habel, the Winchester furniture shop. Virtually every King Alfred bus seemed to have an advert for Habel on its rear — and sometimes on its side as well! Somehow, the name fascinated me; I never quite knew how to say it — in fact it rhymes with 'able', as I have subsequently discovered.

In 1981 I bought my first King Alfred bus — a 1959 Leyland Tiger Cub — and since the Friends of King Alfred Buses came into being about six years ago, we have together acquired eight more! A few months ago we came to the conclusion that our buses, some of which are beginning to look fairly presentable these days, looked rather bare and clinical without their characteristic adverts on them. So we scratched our heads. Wouldn't it be nice, we asked ourselves, to reproduce the original adverts? Wouldn't it be nicer still to get the process paid for... by the original advertisers?

A careful study of all the available photos followed. Not surprisingly some of the businesses had long since gone. But others, it seems, are still thriving 30 years or so on. I wrote first, of course, to Habel's. To my surprise they were enthusiastic, seeing the public relations possibilities. Our signwriter got busy and suddenly we had a 'Habel' on the side of our 1970 Leyland Panther (419) and another on the upper rear of 1964 AEC Renown 596. Encouraged, I next paid a call on the Westgate Colour

READY WILLING AND HABEL

Restoring period adverts to preserved King Alfred buses

Centre, a small-scale local business. I showed them the pictures; yes, they too would be glad to participate. Before long we had located enough original advertisers to fill all the vacant spaces and more.

The results are delightful. I never realised just how important to the original look of a vehicle its adverts are. And to the older people who live in Winchester and who see our buses go by, it brings our buses to life. They become pieces of living social history.

So if you own or are involved with bus preservation and the bus still lives in its natural habitat, why not try to trace the original advertisers and see if you can get them to join you on a journey down Memory Lane? You might be surprised at the results!

And, by the way, if you want to inspect the advert-bespattered King Alfred buses, why not come along to the Annual King Alfred Running Day in Winchester on 1 January when, as usual, the Friends of King Alfred Buses (with a little help from their Hants & Dorset friends this year) will be recreating the Winchester scene of 20-30 years ago.

JAMES FREEMAN

Below left:

The King Alfred Leyland Tiger Cub, WGC 104, resplendent with advertisements for Prall.

Below:

Leyland Panther UOU 419H now advertises Habels, the Winchester furniture shop.

BOTH: IAN SHAWYER



BRISTOLS AT WYTHALL

MALCOLM KEELEY reports on a Bristol event in a non-Bristol area



The well-known Westcliff-on-Sea Bristol K5G, AJN 825, at Wythall on 22 September last.

Below:
A trio of green Lodekkas at the Bristol event.

Below right:
Wythall's famous old lady, Birmingham Daimler COG5 1027 with an uncharacteristic line up of Bristol products, including an Olympian, an 'honorary' Bristol.

ALL: MALCOLM KEELEY

A growing event has been the annual gathering organised by Bristol Commercial Vehicle Register at the Birmingham & Midland Museum of Transport at Wythall each September. Originally intended for MW owners only recent years have seen the event extended successfully to all Bristol models. The Register's secretary, the affable Robin Woodcock, was overwhelmed to discover he had enticed no less than 30 Bristols to Wythall for the 1991 event. A further nine reside permanently at Wythall, a surprising number in view of the dearth of Bristols in the Midlands area. Fortunately the enlarged Wythall site was able to gobble up all 39 Bristols in reasonable comfort.

The initial impression was a sea of Tilling green. The line-up of FLFs was particularly evocative of British Transport Commission garages. The youngest of the FLFs, ex-Hants & Dorset LEL 652F was perhaps the most unusual, not only being of the now fairly rare Bristol-engined option but with the semi-automatic gearbox only applied to a handful of Lodekkas immediately before the model went out of production.

It was not all green, however; notable relief came in the form of the two K5Gs present, both in different reds. The prewar variant was represented by the magnificent ex-Westcliff example, one of the few still to retain its original bodywork. HPW 133 represented the postwar version, an ex-Eastern Counties machine which now

resides with the Lincolnshire Vintage Vehicle Society. HPW has one of those well-rounded roofs applied to 1946-50 ECW highbridge bodies. Very cuddly.

It comes as something of a surprise nowadays to be reminded that Bristol's Greyhound coaches were red and cream in an otherwise green fleet; MW6G BHU 92C, with dual-purpose rather than coach-style bodywork represented that livery. Another important exception was Midland General. Bristol VRT FRB 211H lives at Wythall and is still clad in the original operator's beautiful blue and cream. Visiting RELL6G NNU 447J wore the short-lived black and cream livery which carried not only Midland General's fleetname but that of the associated Mansfield District concern. Other Wythall vehicles in interesting liveries were Cheltenham District FSF 802 MHW and RELL6L KHW 306E, and Royal Blue RELH coach OTA 632G.

United Counties was well-represented. Most carried Tilling green and cream but Wythall's own CBD 778K was newly restored to NBC green. This interesting VRT was one of many early examples rebuilt by the operator to VRT3 standards, of which the most visible modification was the curved windscreen. A welcome intruder was Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympian D379 XRS which brought the story up to date; Bristol diehards were insistent that it was a VRT4!

ECW was even more prevalent than Tilling green. L-type LHT 911, however, represented the Bristol name as operator, chassis builder *and* bodybuilder. Also out of the ordinary and belonging to the only large order for Bristols in the West Midlands area was JOV 714P. One of 200 VRTs purchased by West Midlands PTE it carries South Staffs Tramways livery on its PTE-style MCW body.

The Bristol Commercial Vehicle Register caters for both owners and supporters of Bristols, including lorries. More information can be obtained from Robin Woodcock, 60 Ashorne Close, Matchborough West, Redditch B98 0EZ.



PRESERVATION

LT MUSEUM

SPECIAL

A special enthusiasts' day was held at the London Transport Museum on 16 November in conjunction with Ian Allan Publishing. In addition to a very varied display of mainly London buses held on the piazza at Covent Garden a vintage bus service operated between the museum and Holborn and Aldwych Underground stations, as a shuttle service was being operated on the Aldwych branch of the Piccadilly Line.

Although no fares were charged as such on the bus service the fact that the services were restricted only to those holding tickets for the day meant that an element of hire & reward was involved and therefore the service had to be provided by psv-licensed buses working on hire to Reading Heritage Travel on a one-day London Bus Agreement.

Despite this restriction on the buses able to operate the service there was nonetheless a good variety of attractive vehicles available, as the following pictures show.

KEVIN LANE was there to sign copies of his new book 'Bus Recognition — London's Buses' (reviewed on p9) but escaped for a while to take the photographs.

Top:
Finished in a prewar Bournemouth livery, Bournemouth Heritage Transport provided this attractive dual-door Leyland PD3, 154 (8154 EL), seen in Kingsway.

Above right:
Now owned by Marshall of Sutton-on-the-Fosse, but kept in psv service in the livery of its original operator, Gash of Newark, is Daimler CVG6/Massey DD10 (RAL 765), seen at the Covent Garden museum.

Owned until recently by Reading Transport but now in the ownership of Reading Heritage Travel is this lowbridge Park Royal-bodied AEC Regent III, No 4 (MRD 17), also seen in Kingsway.

The Delaine's unique Yeates-bodied Leyland PD3, No 50 (RCT 3) was also used on the special service. Driven by Kevin Delaine-Smith, it is seen passing Holborn Underground station.



BUSES Rally calendar

The April issue of *Buses* will include our annual guide to museums and rallies. Rally organisers and those involved with promoting museums with a bus/coach interest are asked to let the editor have all details for inclusion by **12 February** please.

All information to The Editor, Rally Calendar & Museum Guide, *Buses*, Terminal House, Shepperton, Middlesex TW17 8AS.

WORLD OF TRANSPORT

DPR MARKETING & SALES



BOOKS

■ ADAM GORDON

Kidderminster & Southport Electric Tramway
Co Rules & Regulations For Officers &
Servants, as from 16th May 1899 £7.00
Tramways of Reading £12.00

■ AUTOBUS PUBLICATIONS

Cross Channel Exiles in Ulster £8.95
Northern Rose — History of West Yorkshire
Company £8.95

Stagecoach And Its Subsidiaries £8.95

Stagecoach And Its Subsidiaries Vol 2:
Buses Mean Business £10.95

Shadows of West Yorkshire £6.95

■ BUS ENTHUSIAST

Bus Enthusiast Review Volume 6 £3.95

London Buses in Exile (new edition) £4.95

■ CARLTON PUBLISHING

Trams & Buses in Burton 1903-1985 £9.95

■ CAPITAL TRANSPORT

Bus Handbook: Eastern England £6.95

Bus Handbook: East Midlands £6.95

Bus Handbook: N/East England £6.95

Bus Handbook: North West England £6.95

Bus Handbook: Scotland £7.95

Bus Handbook: SE England £6.95

Bus Handbook: SW England £7.95

Bus Handbook: West Midlands £6.95

London Buses In The 1950s £14.95

London Buses in WWII, reprint £16.95

London Handbook PT1 — New Edition £7.95

London Handbook PT2 £7.95

National Express Bus Handbook £5.95

Routemasters Vol 1: 1954-69 £16.95

RF - A definitive history £16.95

Welsh Bus Handbook £6.95

West Midlands PTE £15.95

Yorkshire Bus Handbook £7.95

■ CRONER PUBLICATIONS

A Professional Drivers Guide (10th Edn)
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Coach And Bus Drivers Handbook £7.95

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for financial management in road haulage
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A reference source on legislation, both UK
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■ IAN ALLAN LTD

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Bus And Coach Recognition:
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Bus And Coach Recognition (2nd ed) £5.95

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Bus Monograph 5: Bristol RE £7.95

Bus Monograph 6: Leyland Titan PD3 £8.95

Bus Profile: Routemaster (with colour) £10.95

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LT Bus Garages Since 1948. £11.95

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■ J. HAMBLEY

London Transport. Buses & Coaches
in 1949 £10.95

London Transport Buses & Coaches in
1950 £10.95

■ IAN HENDRY PUBLISHING

Bedford — The Commercial Vehicle For All
Purposes £15.95

■ IPSWICH BUSES LTD

Ipswich Buses — An Illustrated History with
colour £4.95

■ L. T. MUSEUM

Moving Millions — A Pictorial History of
London Transport £9.95

■ J. M. PEARSON PUBLISHING

Blue Bus Services £7.50

■ LANCASTRIAN TRANSPORT PUBLICATIONS

Blackpool — A Bus Handbook £4.50

Trams To The Tower £4.95

■ LOTS

LOTS Bus Review 1989 £9.95

Country Area Review 1990 £6.95

■ LRTA

Tramways of Grimsby, Immingham &
Cleethorpes £6.00

■ LRO BOOKS

British Land Rovers In The Gulf £7.99

Know Your Land Rover £8.95

■ MIDDLETON PRESS

The Tillingbourne Bus Story £8.95

Blue Motors Remembered £10.95

■ PENNINE PUBLICATIONS

Trams In Trouble £3.95

■ PETER HOLMES

Odiham Motor Services — "The Nancy Bus"
£3.50

■ PSV CIRCLE

Fleet History of China Motor Bus Company
— Hong Kong £5.00

Fleet History of Kowloon Motor Bus
Company — Hong Kong £5.00

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Nottinghamshire Buses In Camera £8.25

Sussex Buses In Camera £7.95

Humber Buses In Camera £8.95

■ ROBIN HOOD PUBLISHING

Barton Part 2: 1950-1961 £6.00

■ SOUTHDOWN ENTHUSIAST CLUB

1991 Fleet List of Southdown & Brighton &
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■ SHEAF PUBLISHING

Around London By Tram £7.95

Extra — London Trolleybuses In The 1950s
£3.75

Sheffield Trams Remembered £3.25

Weekend Bus Driver £8.50

■ TERMINUS PUBLICATIONS

Riding with Hulley's of Baslow £3.50

■ N.B. TRACTION GROUP

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Paisley's Trams & Buses — 20s to 80s
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Major Bus And Coach Fleets: Northern
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East Midlands £7.00

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Heritage Trams — An Illustrated Guide
£4.95

■ TRANSPORT PUBLISHING CO

British Bus, Tram & Trolleybus Systems 10:
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Systems 12: SHMD £14.50

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Bus Scape Vol 1: S. E. Sussex £15.95

Bus Scape Vol 2: S. W. Sussex £15.95

Blackpool's Trams And Buses £24.95

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Made for PMT in 1962, covers the running
of a bus company, including schedules,
operation, maintenance, overhaul etc. On
the same tape is, "I Like London", a PMT
coach is seen leaving a Potteries town,
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where other coaches are seen.

Hastings And District Trolleybuses £19.95

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London Buses Volume 7 £15.95

London Buses Volume 8 £15.95

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Routemaster - The Last London Bus £24.95

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Silent Classics No 6 £11.45

Southdown In The 1950s £15.95

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Another PMT film, this one was made to
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Southdown In The 1950s £15.95

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The postal service, from the Scottish
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London Buses Remembered £16.95

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■ STEAM POWERED VIDEO

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The History of Hull City Transport Trams &
Trolleys Vol 1 £7.95

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CHRISTMAS CLOSING TIMES

Over the Christmas/New Year holiday, we shall be opening/closing as follows:

23 and 24 DECEMBER 1991 OPEN 9.30AM-5.30PM • 25, 26, 27 DECEMBER 1991 CLOSED • 28, 30, 31
DECEMBER 1991 OPEN • 01, 02, 03 JANUARY 1992 CLOSED • 04 JANUARY 1992 OPEN 9.30AM-5.00PM

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PAYMENT: Access/Eurocard/Mastercard/Visa/Electron/JCB/Switch/Diners Club. THE EXPIRY DATE MUST BE STATED WHEN SENDING OR PHONING ORDERS. SWITCH MUST ALSO GIVE THEIR ISSUE NUMBER. Cheques, paid on a UK bank must be accompanied by full details of a cheque guarantee card (if paying a personal cheque). You may also use our Postal Giro Account No 312 4657, however, allow £1.00 extra owing to surcharge by Giro.

PTCs

GM Buses

Park Royal-bodied Leyland Atlantean 7913 (ANC 913T) is reinstated at Bury with similar 7830 (UNA 830S) now placed into reserve, whilst Leyland National 160 (KBU 895P) has been given a new lease of life at Oldham.

Depot closures were deferred until 24 November, with large scale transfers of vehicles due to result. Fleetlines will work from Atherton, Bolton and Princess Road with non-standard Olympians 3016-25 (with 6LXCT turbocharged engines) and 3026-35 (with Voith transmission) together with open-top Atlantean 7077 all at the last-mentioned base. Glossop will increase to a 28-strong all-Metrobus allocation, whilst Oldham's compliment of the breed changes from 24 to 86. Former LUT Leopards are to work on ex-Swinton service 127 from Queens Road, whilst all Ivecos will go to pool status and only 107 Dodge minis will survive in use.

Dodges in the new mini livery are 1792, 1845/50/70/99, 1983/6/97 with 1845, 1983/97 (D845 LND, E983/97 SJA) being reinstated. Olympian 3077 has been given an overall advert for the MGM 10-screen cinema complex at Stockport, Metrorider 1648 not wearing the new mini livery (thus far).

An unusual visitor to Stockport depot recently was London Buses final AEC Routemaster, RML2760 (SMK 760F) in connection with a wedding charter.

South Yorkshire Transport

A further 25 Alexander PS-type-bodied Volvo B10Ms have been ordered for 1992. They will bring the total of the type in the fleet to 115.

Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean 1698 (CWG 698V) and Roe-bodied sisters 1749/51/61 (CWG 749V etc) have been withdrawn, 1749, a fire victim, being quickly disposed of and the others placed on reserve. Leyland National 10 (AAK 110T) is unlicensed, whilst similar 21-3 (KWA 21-3W), Leyland National 2s, are out of use along with Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard 65 (KKW 65P), all of which are in reserve status. Metrobuses withdrawn are 1846/8/52/3/6/63/4/82 (JHE 146W etc), but 1846/8/52/3/6/82 were quickly reinstated although 1863/4 have been sold. The only survivors of the Mk 1 Metrobuses by the time these notes are read should be 1848/59/61/6/8/74/6/83.

Disposals to record are Optare-bodied Dennis Dominos 46/7 (C46/7 HDT) to Stevensons, Uttroter; Metrobuses 1863/4 to Motts of Aylesbury with Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopard 88 (OWG 368X); Alexander-bodied Atlanteans 1683/91 (CWG 683/91V) to Blue Bus, Bolton and similar 1727 (CWG 727V) and Roe-bodied 1792 (CWG 792V) to Stott, Oldham with 1749/64 (CWG 749/64V) to PVS, Carlton (dealer) for scrap. Heavily cannibalised Metrobus 1836 (JHE 136W) went to North, Sherburn-in-Elmet (dealer) whilst Leyland National 8 (AAK 108T) has settled with Wright, Wrexham.

Leyland-DAB articulated 2012 now wears Rotherham Mainline colours in line with the Volvos with blue/black skirt and 2011/3 will follow, for service 69. Metrobuses 1918/9 are expected to don Sheffield Mainline colours in place of withdrawn 1887/96. Rotherham Mainline repaints are of Dennis Dominators 2265/6/8/70, whilst all of Halfway's school buses have donned yellow fronts and rears, affecting Leyland National 1064, Atlanteans 1697 and 1766/71-3 which, apart from 1064 and 1697 are also lettered 'school bus'.

West Midlands Travel

Tyburn Road Works is to refurbish a batch of 49 Fleetlines and 14 Leyland Nationals at a cost of some £750,000 during 1992. Work is to include new engines for the Leyland Nationals and mechanical/internal refurbishment for the Fleetlines. The first reported is 6615 (SDA 615S) which had been in store at Wolverhampton, Park Lane while Leyland Nationals 1020/1 (DOC 20/1V) have been fitted with DAF engines.

Metrobuses reinstated are 2271 (GOG 271W) at Hockley and 2365 (LOA 365X) at Walsall, but accident-damaged DAF-engined Leyland Nationals 1511 (TOE 511N) and 1850 (TVP 850S) have gone into store, as has 1845 (TVP 845S) which has facilities for the disabled. All Reeve Burgess-bodied Dodge S56s are now stored at Walsall also, last in service being 565/9/71/2/6/8/9 (D565 NDA etc) MCW Metroriders 636/46/57-61 (D636/46 NOE, E657-61 RVP) have replaced them.

On the subject of Dennis Dart windscreens, I am advised that 801-3 have two-piece screens and just 804/5 the flat single-piece version.

COUNCIL OWNED COMPANIES

Blackburn Transport

The new Volvo B10Ms with East Lancs DP51F bodywork are reported as 201-5 (J421/2, 418-20 JBV). 201/2 were used for driver training prior to entering service, whilst 203 appeared at the Coach & Bus '91 at the NEC. They wear standard bus livery of ivory with dark green skirt/wheels and a dark green feature line on which is carried the fleetname Blackburn. They have many DIPTAC features and Bright-Tec electronic destination equipment including side and rear service number displays. They are for Manchester services X1, 701/2 on which they have ousted Leyland Tigers 414-7 which now work on service 346 between Accrington and Darwen via Blackburn, replacing double-deckers which has enabled Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopards 295/9, 300/1 (ANJ 304/15/6/1T) to be delicensed and stored. Further coaches are expected to cater for continued growth in coaching operations, which are due this winter.

Boro'line Maidstone

Metro-Cammell-bodied Leyland Fleetline 266 (NOC 379R) and Leyland National 903 (BYW 380V) have been put aside for disposal whilst DAF coaches 293/4/6 (G970/1 KJX, E320 EVH) returned to Hughes DAF after the summer season.

Scania coach 205 (790 SKO, originally C92 DTM) has been re-registered again to C874 YKE. Bedford YMT/Duple Dominant 275 (AKK 175T) has now taken cherished mark 794 SKO.

Leyland Titan PD2A/Massey 226 (26 YKO) featured in a recent Charity Day and bus-pull contest, with Titan PD3/4/Northern Counties 'Queen Mary' 290 (BUF 278C) operating a shuttle service between the town centre and Coombe Quarry. Ikarus/DAFs 220-2 are receiving Park & Ride livery, 220/1 completed with 222 awaited at the time of writing, with 213 due later.

Rare Massey-bodied Leyland Atlanteans formerly 36 and 38 (JKE 336/8E) are now with Haven Coaches, Newhaven for continued service.

Bournemouth Transport

The Bournemouth Heritage Transport Collection provides some interesting news again this month. The town is twinned with Lucerne, Switzerland, and so rather appropriately, Lucerne Saurer two-axle trolleybus 228 (latterly at Schaffhausen as its 207) has joined the collection. It was built in 1961 and has a 27-seat standee-style body; it passed to Schaffhausen in 1979 — the system having opened in 1966 (a contrast to the UK!). It is fully operational and it is planned to restore the trolley to Lucerne condition.

Further on the trolleybus theme, amazingly Sunbeam MF2B/Weymann trolleybus 297 (297 LJ) operated on service between Westbourne and the roundabout at the top of Poole Hill on 28 September under its own power, electrical input coming from a generator trailer. It generated considerable interest from the public also — despite unfortunately poor weather on the day.

The Collection's open-top Leyland Titan PD3/1 is 156 (8156 EL) and not 154 as this vehicle is also with BHTC but retaining its roof. 156 was acquired in very poor condition from a Nottingham scrapyard, hard to imagine given its superlative condition now; it lost both its roof and front staircase, but retains outwardly unique Bournemouth appearance as it still has its front exit and rear entrance intact. 154 is also repainted in the prewar style 'heritage' livery, with yellow, white roof, maroon bands edged in green beneath upper and lower saloon windows and bright yellow band edged in green above the lower saloon windows. Yellow areas are lined-out in red and side panels bear the legend 'The Bournemouth Sightseeing Tour' in red.

Alexander-bodied Daimler Fleetline 15 (DLJ 115L) has been withdrawn and cannibalised, then broken up. Following the sale of two open-toppers to People's Provincial, the coastal service saw frequent closed-top operation during 1991.

Brighton Borough Transport

Dennis Dominator 21 and Leyland National 2 26 have both been outshopped in standard Brighton bus livery, both for the first time — 21 previously wore coach livery and more recently all-over white, whilst 26 was new in Shuttle livery and had latterly been an overall advert for Coombs petshop.

Cardiff City Transport

The first of the new batch of 12 Leyland Lynx IIs has now started to arrive, those so far being 261-9 (J261-9 UDW) which have Cummins engines and are to B49F layout with stepped floor (unlike 231-59 which have sloping floors). Willowbrook-bodied Bristol VRTs 302/3/5/17/8 were SWO 302S etc, not as shown last month.

Colchester Borough Transport

ECW-bodied Leyland Atlantean 61 (NNO 61P) has passed to Carter, Colchester with sisters 63/6 (NNO 63/6P) going to Boon, Boreham. 65 (NNO 65P) is last of its batch to work for CBT.

Leyland Lynx 31 is now an overall advert for Woods Garden Centre.

Body type

- B Single-deck bus
- C Coach
- DP Dual purpose, usually coach seats/bus shell
- H Double-decker
- L Lowbridge double-decker (ie with side sunken gangway upstairs. All other types, with conventional gangways are H [Highbridge] regardless of overall height)
- O Open-top
- CO Convertible open-top

Seating capacity

(For double-deckers this is shown with the upper-deck capacity first, eg 43/30, indicating 43 'over' 30. Where these are not known a total figure is given).

Door position

- F Front
- R Rear
- C Centre
- D Dual doors

Where platform doors are fitted where these would not normally figure, usually on a rear entrance bus, this is indicated by D after the door position. The letter 'I' after the door indicates the provision of a toilet whilst L after the door position shows that a wheelchair lift is fitted.

Vehicle reports should be sent to
J. G. Lidstone, 76 Thames Drive, Leigh-on-Sea,
Essex SS9 2XD.
Please mark your envelope 'Fleet News'.

Great Yarmouth Transport

Former Waveney ECW-bodied AEC Swifts 91/2 (NRT 564/5L) have passed to the Eastern Transport Collection, both as non-runners. Newer sisters 81/4/5 (WEX 681/4/5M) were on loan to Wiltshire, Sea Palling in July (84/5) and September/October (81) whilst 84 has also appeared with Neave, Catfield in October.

Duple-bodied Dennis Darts 56-8 (G456-8 KNG) have been equipped with Bright-Tech destination displays. From the latest round of Norfolk County Council tenders, Blue Buses has gained services from Halvergate to Acle (Thursdays), Great Yarmouth to Norwich via Wroxham (winter Sundays) and Great Yarmouth to Marham (weekday evenings). Existing tendered routes see regular services in the Stokesby, Thurne, Beccles, Bungay, Belton, Ormesby, Marham, Brundall and Wroxham areas whilst contract operation includes Aylsham, Lowestoft, Kessingland and Oulton additionally.

Grimsby-Cleethorpes Transport

Acquired are 1984 Duple Laser C57F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2Rs 191/3 (A601/3 HVT). A602 HVT has been renumbered 192 to match.

Halton Borough Transport

Another new Leyland Lynx II with B51F body is 36 (J249 KWM). It is of type LX2R11C15Z4R, whilst 37 (J250 KWM) is a further Mk 1 Lynx.

Hyndburn Transport

Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopard 73 (RCH 418R) has been reinstated.

Kingston-upon-Hull City Transport

Roe-bodied Leyland Atlanteans 320/7 (DRH 320/7L) have been withdrawn.

Lancaster City Transport

Now in service on the Lancaster-Leeds service is 827 (UKE 827X), an ex-East Kent (8827) ECW DP49F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3G/4R. Similar 829 (UKE 829X) is also owned and is in the process of being converted to carry wheelchairs by the fitting of a lift and floor tracking. It is expected that it will have a capacity of about 33 when completed. This is a new departure for Lancaster.

Newport Transport

A new coach delivered is 5 (J905 UBO), a Leyland Tiger with Cummins L10 250bhp engine and ZF five-speed automatic gearbox and Plaxton Paramount 3200 C53F bodywork. Nottingham 750, a Volvo-engined B50F Leyland Lynx II H47 NDU currently being used by Volvo Bus as a demonstrator, has been on loan. Further demonstrators are expected to follow before the end of 1991.

Nottingham City Transport

Further to *Buses* November, an additional Mercedes-Benz/Reeve Burgess B27F is 176 (J176 CNU), whilst two more are due as 168/9 (J168/9 CTO). The former demonstrator 811Ds with Carlyle B33F bodywork are now 177/8 (H727/32 LOL) whilst new arrivals of the same type are 179-81 (J179-81 CRB) with 182-4 (J182-4 CTO) reported due. A new Leyland Tiger/Plaxton C57F is 796 (J796 CNN).

Acquired vehicles are 3-5 (LRB 213-5W), B52F Leyland National 2 NL116L11/1Rs, ex-Trent 213-5, and 19 (ETT 319Y), a further example ex-Plymouth Health Authority. The Scania N113DRB/Alexander H47/33F from Harris, Grays is now 359 (E307 EVW); F312 PEV remains with Harris.

Northern Counties-bodied Daimler Fleetline 204 (PAU 204R) has found a quieter lease of life as a mobile library with Nottinghamshire County Council.

Plymouth City Transport

Reader Brian Latimer from Goonellabah, New South Wales kindly informs me that Leyland Atlantean PDR1/1/Metro-Cammell H44/33F 140 (VDR 940) is now undergoing restoration to Plymouth livery in preservation in Australia, whilst sisters 142/4 (VDR 942/4) continue in service at Sydney (see *Buses Extra* 70). 140 had been used for many years by Kirklands of Lismore. Former Maidstone & District DH512 (512 DKT), also ex-Kirklands, is similarly being restored to full M&D colours for rallying in Australia this season.



Cardiff Bus currently has 12 Leyland Lynx IIs being delivered, including 269 (J269 UDW).
A. J. WILTSHIRE



Two comparatively recent deliveries in Chester. Chester City Transport Reeve Burgess-bodied Dennis Dart 51 (J51 EDM) and Wrights Leyland Lynx II H256 YLG converge.
JOHN ALDRIDGE



Derby City Transport has a new livery, based on that of its minibuses. Carrying the new livery is Northern Counties-bodied Daimler Fleetline 291 (XRR 291S), with an ex-Cleveland Fleetline of Camms behind.
ROY MARSHALL

Preston Borough Transport

A total of eight all-Leyland Olympians is due for imminent delivery, first of which is J976 PRW, which is currently on a demonstration tour for Leyland in full Preston livery. The remaining seven are to be 107-10/2-4 (J107-10/2-4 KCW), with 111 omitted owing to the impossibility of matching registration number. 107 was first to arrive in Preston colours but not the usual livery as it is lettered for the 1992 Preston Guild and was exhibited at Coach & Bus '91, the first time a Preston vehicle has been so exhibited.

Reading Transport

Optare Metroriders 608-12 (J608-12 SJB) have been delivered, 607 due to follow later after exhibition along with the Optare Spectra double-decker 701 (MRD 1) at the NEC. They are B25F and 612 was the 600th vehicle to join the Reading fleet.

Following the transfer of the Bee Line's Reading-based 'Londonlink' services to this operator from 1 October, eight Duple 425 integrals have joined the fleet as 241-3 (E205/9/10 EPB), ex-Alder Valley 1205/9/10, and 244-8 (E451-4/6 CGM), ex-Berks Bucks 771-4/6, all of which were new in 1987. 241-3 are C57F, the rest C55F. The lease on Forbury depot at Kenavon Drive has also been taken, the resultant consolidation of London-Reading services leading to a single newly-branded service in early 1992. Coaches on loan until mid-October were Berks Bucks 764/5 (A214/5 DPB), Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RHs with Plaxton Paramount C51F bodywork and 783/6/8-90 (F773, 756/8-60 QJH), Volvo B10M/Jonckheere Jubilee C53F. The two Optare Metroriders on hire, 840/1 (H840/4 HUA) have also returned.

The remaining Scania-MCW Metropolitan fleet managed to survive the inauguration of the new services, vehicles being delicensed after morning peak run-in on 6 September, which saw the demise of native examples 105/9/10/2/7/22-4/33 (ORD 105/9/10/2/7R, SGM 122-4/33S) and ex-London sisters 401/8/11/5/8/9 (KJD 202/19P, OUC 115R, KJD 257/07P) together with ex-Tyne & Wear 427 (OCU 782R). Additionally, 132 (SGM 132S) and 413 (KJD 246P) were taken out of service but remain licensed. By October, just four of those withdrawn remained at Mill Lane (411/7/9/27) and indeed 411 was used for exercises in connection with the Fire Brigade to right an overturned bus, where both the Brigade and Reading Transport were involved. Apparently the Metropolitan stood up to being toppled severally with remarkably little damage. Metropolitans surviving at the time of writing — some of which may now see service well into 1992 — are, fortunately the innovating 101 (GRX 1N), ex-London 401/6/18 (KJD 202P, OUC 105R, KJD 257P) and ex-Tyne & Wear 426 (OCU 772R). Optare-bodied Mercedes 607 (F607 SDP) has been withdrawn, although it was quickly reinstated afterwards minus ticket-issuing equipment.

MCW Metrobuses 146-9 (A146 AMO, B147-9 EDP) appear frequently on local service, sisters 143/4 (A143/4 AMO) remaining on Goldline work and 145 (A145 AMO) being allocated to both as required. Meanwhile, all Leyland Titans now wear latest livery following repaints for 68/9 and 71.

Metropolitans 110/33 (ORD 110R, SGM 133S) are now with Darleyford Coaches, Liskeard, with 105 (ORD 105R) believed with a Biblical society locally in Reading. Unlucky 117 (ORD 117R) has been badly attacked by vandals at the Penta yard after being parked there following withdrawal. Leyland Tigers 202/4 (RMO 202/4Y) are now quoted with Pulyn's Transport, Reading for contract work. The much cherished 4 (MRD 147), a superb 1957 AEC Regent III 6812A with Park Royal L31/26RD bodywork, has finally been withdrawn also. It is now with Russell, Reading with PCV certificate and available for private hire. Happily, it remains garaged at Mill Lane and is maintained there also.

Rather in fashion of earlier decades, when all AEC badges were removed from such vehicles by the company, all MCW badges are now being taken off stock. Metrobus Mk II 147 is an exception, having been repainted with legend '1901 90 Yrs of Public Transport in Reading 1991'.

Interestingly, ex-Harrow Buses MCW Metrorider 461 (E475 SON) was re-registered MRD 1 in September, the mark carried by innovative Optare Spectra 701 at the NEC later. The mark came from the Reading Mayoral car, which fell terminally ill at the time its experienced chauffeur retired, so the concept was killed, the cherished registration being loaned to RTL.

Following an incident with DAF/Optare Delta 509 (G509 XBL) where one of its wheeltrims detached in Shinfield Road and hit a car rear screen, all wheeltrims have been removed from this class.

Readers interested in Reading Transport and other local operators in the area are commended to *Bus Fare*, published by the British Trolleybus Society and issued with *Trolleybus* each month. The Society may be contacted (please enclose SAE) at 2 Josephine Court, Southcote Road, Reading RG3 2DG. I am grateful for the wealth of detail provided by *Bus Fare* for these columns.

Rossendale Transport

Leyland Tigers re-registered are 303 (B887 WRJ) to OIB 5403, 304 (A886 OND) to OIB 3604, 305 (FJA 400Y) to OIB 6205 and 306 (FTD 758W) to OIB 8606.

Northern Counties-bodied Daimler Fleetline 43 (YNA 356M) is reinstated.

Southampton Citybus

Transformed Leyland Atlantean AN68/1Rs 176 (PCR 299M) and 198 (HTR 567P) with their stylish new East Lancs B35F bodywork have been re-registered QJ1 1870/1 and renumbered to 350/1.

Despite the arrival of these rebuilt vehicles Southampton is parting with some more modern rolling stock. Leyland Olympians 278/80 (A278/80 ROW) and 286 (C286 BBP) have gone to Sheffield Omnibus while Dennis Dominators 282/3 (C282/3 BBP) have passed to Bullock of Cheadle.

Leyland Nationals NEV 683M and JNO 198N, Solent Blue Line 428/30, are on loan to work service 52 to Petersfield on contract from that company. Both were new to Eastern National, 428 being a 1973 1151/1R/0402, 430 a 1975 11351/1R, both with B49F layout.

Southend Transport

Hot on the heels of MAN/Optare Vecta demonstrator 700 (H846 UUA) has come DAF/Optare Delta demonstrator 800 (G837 LWR), the first ever use of any 8xx number by Southend.

The rolling programme to convert Leyland Fleetline/Northern Counties 231-42 (MRJ 231-42W) to semi-automatic gear control and single-door (H49/33F) continues. 235-7/42 are now semi-auto and 233/5/7/8/42 single-door. All B44F Leyland Nationals are being downseated to B41F by the provision of a luggage pen. Those affected are 708/9/11/2/5 (GHU 645N, JBO 345/9N, JTV 593T, HMA 560T), conversions being made in time for the Christmas shopping period. AEC Routemasters are losing their names at repaint/refurbishment, 101-5 (OYM 413A, VLT 172, WLT 577, 797, 937) being treated thus far. Former Clydeside C54 (LDS 248A, originally WLT 830) continues as a source of spares at the Tickfield Engineering Works. Good news is that there is now no intention to withdraw any Routemasters, as they have now firmly established themselves as reliable and effective members of the fleet.

Former 356 (WJN 356J), a 1971 Fleetline/Northern Counties, has been disposed of as scrap by Ford. Althorne following engine failure - it frequently revisited its old haunts on a Fridays shoppers service, now the preserve of a Bristol VRT/ECW.

The two remaining minibuses, Iveco 49.10/Carlyle B23F 411/2 (E295/6 VOM) remain in regular daily use, but are up for sale.

Thamesdown Transport

Marshall-bodied single-deck Dennis Dominators 1, 3 and 4 (FAM 1W etc) have been withdrawn and are under cannibalisation with sister 2 (FAM 2W) due to follow in March. Former Wallace Arnold Duple-bodied Leyland Leopards 304/7 (SWW 144R, CWW 192T) have also been withdrawn, 307 passing to Hollywood Travel, Birmingham.

County Borough of Wigan

A welcome airing of this title is justified by the news that the very last halfcab in the GM Buses fleet, 3271 (AEK 1B) new to Wigan as its 146 and still regularly employed in the driver training school, has been treated to a repaint. It is now basically white with dark orange upper saloon panelling, black skirt and sports a new rear bumper. It is perhaps appropriate that this latest halfcab should come from Wigan, for that stable operated the last front-engined double-deckers also — GM's Volvos 1446-8 (NNA 134W, SRJ 447/8X) now with Lancaster.

PRIVATE SECTOR

AERE, Harwell

Having had an intriguing fleet of double- and single-deckers bought new for workers services for many years, changes have now brought the end of company-owned vehicles with remaining services covered by contracts with local coach operators. The fleet of AEC Regent Vs was well known and at one time, the vehicle stock reached some 40 vehicles outshopped in blue and grey. More recent purchases included Leyland Nationals, Bristol VRTs and Leyland Olympians. 1982 saw starting times altered, with fleet reduction from route rationalisation and certain services were then contracted out. There have never been many such operators of brand new full-sized PSVs solely on in-house contracts.

Leyland Olympians 100-3 (FWL 778-81Y) were recently snapped up by Oxford Bus Co as 236-9.

Alder Valley

New is Iveco/Reeve Burgess B25F 495 (J416 TGM) at Hindhead. The last Bovas have been withdrawn from the coaching unit and were 1402-5 (A665 EMY, E665/772 JNR) whilst Bova Europa 1401 (KEP 640X) is now with Heyfordian, Upper Heyford. ECW-bodied Leyland Olympian coaches finding welcome new homes are 1510 (B578 LPE) with Filer, Ilfracombe and 1503/9 (YPJ 503Y, B577 LPE) with Clyde Coast, Ardrossan.

Alder Valley (West Surrey)

179-81 (D79-81 TLV) are Freight Rover Sherpa 374s with Carlyle B20F bodywork for the Guildford Park & Ride. They are in (Guildford Link) yellow and green livery. From London & Country have come SNB172 (HPK 322N), a Leyland National 10351/1R/B41F and SNB244 (NPK 244R) a similar 103510A/1R/B41F for use at Cranleigh. A newer sister is Leyland National 2 NL106AL11/1R/B44F 286 (LFR 876X) ex-North Western, as are 179-81 above.

Withdrawals are of ECW-bodied Bristol VRT 940 (OPL 216R) and Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympians 906-8/10 (F576-8/80 SMG) all of which are to transfer elsewhere for further service. Gardner-engined Leyland National 285 (TPE 161S) is now with London & Country at Addlestone, in full L&C livery. Either Olympian 901 or 910 (F571/80 SMG) is to migrate to London & Country at Leatherhead, whilst the same fleet also now has Leyland Nationals 191, 200 (GPJ 891N, HPK 502N).

Ambassador Travel

Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tigers 899, 906/7 (A899 KAH, B906/7 RVF) have been withdrawn and sold to United as 1409/11/2.

Barnard, Kirton-in-Lindsay

Now in stock are LAL 745P, MTV 763/4P, Leyland Leopard PSU3C/4Rs with Duple DP53F bodywork ex-Erewash E45, 63/4 but new to Nottingham City, and RYG 388R, a Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB with ECW H43/31F body ex-West Riding 834.

Bee Line Buzz Co

Acquisitions are A160 EPA, B288 KPF, Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RHs with Plaxton C50Ft bodywork and similar A898 KAH with C53F plus Northern Counties-bodied Volvo D10Ms G644-7 BPH London & Country whilst from C-Line has come 3418 (D418 NNA), a Dodge S46/Northern Counties B22F.

Leyland Atlanteans UPK 137/9S are now numbered 727, 719 whilst XPG 173/7T are now 713/5. Renumberings are of 435 (RTF 652M) to 717, 470/3 (NRN 380/7P) to 721/3 and 478 (JPL 136K) to 724.

Northern Counties-bodied Dodge 3420 (D420 NNA) is withdrawn as are ECW-bodied Bristol VRT/SL3 1847 (RWT 547R), Carlyle-bodied Freight Rover Sherpa 3061 (D61 NOF) and youthful Mercedes-Benz 130/2/3 (H130/2/3 CDB). 130/2/3, 1847 and 3420 have transferred to C-Line whilst 3061 is with Knighton, Blackburn.

Berks Bucks

New are 740-6 (J740-6 TDP), Scania K113CRBs with Berkhof Excellence 2000 C53F bodywork. 740 was delivered as J742 TDP, but this was corrected before use. They are for the Heathrow RailAir Link in silver grey with black skirt trimmed with a red band and lettering.

Withdrawals are Carlyle-bodied Ford Transit 107 (D828 UTF) now with U-Want Taxis, Maidenhead, Leyland National 323 (TBL 167M), and ECW-bodied Bristol VRT 517 (TPE 154S).

The Big Bus Co, Clapham

A further ex-London DMS in stock is Leyland Fleetline FE30ALR/Park Royal H44/24D QJD 361R which has been outshopped in this operator's 'East Kent'-style traditional maroon/cream colours. It retains its roof.

Black Prince, Morley

Following operation of Routemaster LDS 341A (originally WLT 441), at long last sister CUV 208C has entered service, also in Clydeside colours. Two more Metropolitan BR111DHs have joined this fleet, ex-Reading 109 (ORD 109R) with H45/28D bodywork and newer 132 (SGM 132S) with H43/27D.

Brewer, Maesteg

Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopards B183 (MKH 622A, originally JOX 441P), B184 (MKH 733A, originally JOX 442P) and B185 (MKH 644A, originally JOX 433P) have been withdrawn as have Leyland Nationals B682/4/6 (NHA 274/91M, MAR 782P). The Leopards have returned to United Welsh as U183-5, whilst B682 is now an immobile office, sister B685 (GOL 418N) serving as an engineering storeroom. B686 has passed to Thomas, Barry. Leyland Leopard/Plaxton B162 (278 TNY, originally KUB 669V) has been re-registered ETH 68V.

Brighton & Hove

Bristol VRTs 584/90/3 have been repainted allover yellow for new service B1 and carry black fleetnumbers. Sister 271 (JWV 271W) has passed to Hedingham & District for further service as L194.

Leyland Nationals 55-7, 63 (UFG 55-7S, WYJ 163S) have been delicensed for disposal, whilst Leyland Tiger/Plaxtons 408/9 (C378/9 PCD) have been reallocated to the bus fleet for the winter period.

Bristol

The sole surviving 1966 Bristol Lodekka FLF6G/ECW H38/32F, 7262 (GAE 883D) remains in regular peak-hour service in Tilling green and cream livery. It operates on Filton-Broomhill-Henbury services and passes through the City Centre at 06.50, 09.35, 16.18 and 17.16.

Bullocks, Cheadle

Notable double-deck additions to this fleet are C282/3 BBP, East Lancs H77F-bodied Dennis Dominators, ex-Southampton Citybus 282/3, and ex-London Transport MCW-bodied B21-type Fleetlines THX 539/63S.

C-Line

From Bee Line Buzz has come 1987 Dodge S46/Northern Counties B22F 3420 (D420 NNA), 1976 Bristol VRT/SL3/501/ECW H43/31F RWT 547R, now fitted with Gardner 6LX engine, and 1990 Mercedes Benz/LHE B31F M130-3 (H130-3 CDB).

Carlisle-bodied Freight Rover Sherpas 3150/71/95 (D150/71/95 NON) are withdrawn along with Northern Counties-bodied Dodge MDR418 (D418 NNA) and Duple-bodied Leyland Leopard ELL739 (UTF 739M), whilst previously withdrawn ECW-bodied VRT/SL3 DVL383 (FTU 383T) has been reinstated.

Cavalry Coaches, Washington

A further addition to the fleet is FNS 161T, a Leyland National 1135A/1R with B52F body new to Central Scottish as N19 but latterly with Western.

Carterton Coaches

Park Royal-bodied Daimler Fleetlines NOB 319/42M, GOG 578N have passed to Thomas, Cheltenham, whilst two new arrivals are AEC Reliance/Plaxton C53F NNN 11/2P, from Thomas.

Cheltenham & Gloucester

Midland Red (South) Leyland National 587 (NOE 587R) was acquired in late-October, after loan since May. It is a 1976 B49F 11351A/1R and is now 3040 in this fleet, joined by 3041/2, formerly 555/4 with MRS. 3040/1 now wear City of Gloucester livery.

Fleetnames changes now see MRS407/13 now carry Swindon & District and Stroud Valleys respectively (ex-MRS), 702 Stroud Valleys ex-Swindon & District (on red livery); 3011, in Badgerline colours, now carries Stroud Valleys, Interlink overall advert 5622 Swindon & District ex-City of Gloucester and blue liveried 5120 now Stroud Valleys ex-City of Gloucester.

From the ancillary fleet, Bristol FLF6B/ECW H—F trainer 174 (AAE 262B) dating from 1964, has been withdrawn along with Bristol VRT/SL2/ECW DT1 (GUA 382N). The Lodekka is for sale and those interested should contact the Engineering Director at 3/4 Bath Street, Cheltenham.

Chiltern Queens

Good news is that AEC Reliance/Plaxton Derwent EUD 256K and similarly-bodied Leyland Leopard QJO 835M have received major bodywork overhauls and now wear the same livery as ex-Oxford coaches, with cream above the waistrail. Chiltern Queens will feature in *Buses Extra* 75, on sale on 16 January.

Coach Services, Thetford

The fleet of C. E. Petch & Son, Hopton, Suffolk passed to Coach Services on 1 November last. Vehicles transferred were:

BTL 49L	Bedford YRT Duple C53F
UNW 36M	Bedford YRT Duple C53F
SWT 987M	Bedford VAS5 Duple C29F
HRR 764N	Bedford YRT Plaxton C53F
KVF 853P	Bedford YRT Duple C53F
PNK 167R	Bedford YMT Plaxton C53F
VNT 4S	Bedford YRT Duple C53F
EGV 190T	Bedford YRT Plaxton C53F
FUJ 904V	Bedford YRT Duple C53F
MMJ 538V	Bedford YRT Duple C53F
OGU 743W	Bedford YLQ Duple C33F
WOD 142X	Bedford YNT Duple C53F
B345 RVF	Bedford YNT Duple C53F
C724 XDX	Mercedes Benz L608D
	Chassis Developments C19F
F900 RDX	Bova FHD12-290 Bova C53F

UNW 36M was new to Wallace Arnold, PNK 167R to British Airways, Heathrow, VNT 4S to Whittle, Highley, MMJ 538V to Tricentrol (Tourmaster) Dunstable, WOD 142X to Seward, Dalwood, Devon. C724 XDX was new as TSV 701. SWT 987M and HRR 764N were both delicensed and out of use on the premises as at 1 November. The background to this firm was given in *Buses Extra* 60 (Aug-Sept 1989).

Confidence Coaches, Leicester

Stephen Roberts, aged 14, kindly advises me that four traditional double-deckers remain in use here. Two former Southdown Leyland Titan PD3/4s with Northern Counties FH39/31F bodywork are in stock, 9 (BUF 272C) of 1965 and 12 (HCD 363E) of 1967 and with uncommon panoramic-windowed styling found only rarely on front-engined vehicles. Local interest is maintained with 11 (GRY 55D) a 1966 Titan PD3A/1 with Metro-Cammell H41/33R body ex-Leicester City, the fourth being 15 (WLT 655), an ex-London AEC Routemaster/Park Royal H36/28R. More modern stock comprises Leyland Leopards 13/4 (AHA 451/2J) ex-Midland Red, and Leyland Atlanteans 18/9 (VWM 83/9L) ex-Merseyside, 20-2 (OTO 540M, GVO 717N, OTO 570M) ex-Nottingham, 23/4 (HOR 305/6N) ex-Portsmouth and 25 (KSA 183P) ex-East London.

County Bus & Coach

New are DP301-13 (J301-13 WHJ), Dennis Dart 9SDLs with Reeve Burgess B35F bodywork, MD601-12 (J601-12 WHJ), Mercedes-Benz 811Ds with Reeve Burgess B28F bodywork and MB933-6 (J933-6 WHJ), Mercedes-Benz 709Ds with Reeve Burgess B23F bodywork. Two more 709Ds, MB937/8 (J937/8 WHJ) have been delayed and are expected in March.

Due in January are more Dennis Darts, this time with Wrights B35F bodywork, to be DW314-7, to be followed by 9.8m Darts with Wrights B40F bodywork, DWL401-4, DWL314-7 are for Edmonton, with two of the DPs moving to Grays, and the DWLs are for Hoddesdon for Hertford outstation.

Two Leyland Tigers with Berkhof bodywork in the BTL-series and one Tiger/Plaxton TP-series are due to be acquired from London & County/Speedlink Airport Services as part of the package involving Tigers already sold/shortly to be sold to Midland Red North.

Leyland National SN206 (LPB 206P) has been reinstated, but LN121/4 (WPG 221/4M) and SN208 (LPB 208P) are withdrawn for cannibalisation whilst the hulks of LN67, SN91 and SN153 have now been taken away by a Harlow scrap dealer. ECW-bodied Leyland Olympian coaches LRC14/5 (C214/5 UPD) have passed to Northumbria, Leyland National SN224 (LPB 224P) to Southend Transport whilst Midland Red North has ECW-bodied Leyland Tigers TL23 and TL525.

MB54, 811 now wear overall adverts for solicitors, Stephen Oates and Lees Davis respectively, whilst PL550/1 have lost Sampsons Coaches livery and donned County Bus colours. SN215 is now in fleet livery, having been resealed to B35F, and SN213 has at last shed NBC livery for County Bus, so that all operational vehicles are now in CB, marketing or advertising-overall liveries.

Currian, Nanpean

Ex-Kingston upon Hull Scania-MCW Metropolitan BR111DH/H44/29F KRH 416P has been acquired to replace ex-Merseyside Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean BKC 284K, which has unfortunately contested a low bridge and come off the worse.

1973	Kime, Folkingham	4/81
1974	Wildman, Leeds	7/80
1974	Jennings, Ashen	6/82
1975	Barton 1458	2/83
1975	New	8/75
1977	Kemp, Clacton	11/88
1978	Walls, Wigan	9/85
1979	New	3/79
1980	Whittle, Highley	4/83
1980	Freeman, Uffington	4/88
1981	Spratt, Wrenningham	8/86
1982	Freeman, Uffington	4/88
1984	New	10/84
1985	Sapwell, Newport	9/85
	Pagnell	
1989	New	

Deeble, Darley Ford

A number of the now uncommon Scania-MCW Metropolitan BR111DHs may be recorded in this fleet. Latest arrivals are former Reading 110 (ORD 110R), which is H45/28D, and 133 (SGM 133S) to DPH43/27D. They join former sister 121 (ORD 121R) and former LT OUC 103R. Former Greater Glasgow JUS 754N is withdrawn and being cannibalised for spares, former West Yorkshire PTE MNW 650P is delicensed at present as is ex-Tyne & Wear OTN 448R.

The Delaine, Bourne

A newcomer which will immediately feel at home is 111 (YPD 128Y), another of the 1983 Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2Rs with Duple C53F bodywork new to London Country. However, this one had served more recently with Theobalds of Long Melford. It joins sisters 104-10 (YPD 104-9/32Y) in this smart fleet.

Derby City Transport

Further new Carbodies Fairway (formerly FX4) taxis for the '75' Taxis fleet are J649-51/6/7 OWK and J473/4 RDU. An Optare Vecta demonstrator has been tried, reportedly H824 UUA whilst Ford Transits C21/2 NVV, C193/4 KBH and B27 HRP have been working on extended loan from Luton & District.

Scania saloon 24 has taken on an overall advert for Transad. Dormobile-bodied Freight Rover Sherpas now withdrawn include 161/6/7/8 (D51 TKA, D107/8 XPG, D76 YRF), 172/4/6/7/9 (D741/59 PTU, D77 YRF, D79/4 BRF) and 185/8/90/2 (D755/68/0/79 BRF).

East Kent

The 10 Ivecos with bodywork are still expected, despite the unfortunate passing of Carlisle to receivership. Consequentially, their arrival will be delayed, causing four Mercedes-Benz to be hired from M&D for use at Canterbury. Also on order are four Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Olympians with Cummins engines and ZF transmission for delivery in April.

ECW-bodied Leyland Leopards 8827/9 (UKE 827/9X) have been sold to Lancaster City Transport (qv). Willowbrook-bodied Bristol VRTs 7975/87 (RVB 975S, TFN 987T) have been reinstated. Leyland National 1089 and VRT 7991 have reverted to fleet livery ex-overall adverts, whilst Leyland National 1300 has lost its Hoverspeed vinyls and is regarded as a general spare for vehicles on Dover dockside duties. VRT/ECW 7046 (MFN 46R) has been with Kent Coachworks for accident-damage repairs.

East Surrey

A further new addition to this fleet is B33F Optare Metrorider 34 (J326 PPD).

East Yorkshire

A fifth Volvo B10M-60/Plaxton Expressliner C46Ft is 58 (J58 ERH). As noted in 'News Update' last month orders placed call for 10 Northern Counties-bodied Gardner-engined Leyland Olympians, one Optare Spectra and six East Lancs National Greenways. Five of the National Greenways are to be adapted from existing buses in the fleet whilst the sixth is AYR 326T, originally London Transport LS326 but ex-Luckett, Watford.

Eastern Counties

Useful youthful acquisitions are 1981 Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW H43/31F VR303-10 (PRC 848/50-5/7X) which include the last VR supplied to Trent. They had latterly been Trent Buses 848 etc.

Leyland National LN624 has been repainted as an overall advert for One Step Beyond of Norwich and Dereham. Recent repaints have been in Post Office red, attracting favourable comment.

Eastern National

New are 618-30 (J618-30 UTW), Mercedes Benz 709Ds with Reeve Burgess B23F bodywork. Withdrawals have taken the last short-wheelbase Leyland National, 1500 (PJT 255R), one of four exchanged with Wilts & Dorset for long models, together with 1741/50/4/66/8 (HAR 487N, JNO 199N, LJO 662P, MAR 788/90P) and 1812 (VNO 735S) together with ECW-bodied Bristol VRT 3066 (UVX 3S).

Leyland National 1917 now wears an overall advert for Barclays Bank, but with front in livery, whilst Leyland Olympian DPs 4014/8/20/1 have been treated to a new version of the DP livery, with yellow now extended down to the base of the lower saloon windows. Leyland Lynx 1414 (F414 MNO) has been sent back to Leyland following accident damage. Olympian 4017 is latest to shed its electronic destination equipment in favour of conventional blinds.

1968 Bristol VRTLL6G 3024 (LFS 287F) continues a remarkably long career, having served with South Wales as 904 and now at Palm Springs, USA with Sunvalley Transit. It has just been sold to a new owner in Chicago, but started life with Eastern Scottish, being ousted when the Scottish Bus Group rid itself of these unreliable early-model VRs.

Ensign Citybus

The final slaughter of the DMS is gaining momentum with the culling of 208/9/19/25/9/35/8 (GHV 8N, KUC 929P, OJD 229R, GHV 964, 79N, GHM 794N, GHV 30N). Just 11 examples now remain of the breed, 104/9, 205/11/4-6/23/7/39/40.

RM429 (XMD 81A, originally WLT 429) continues to make very occasional forays into passenger service, in full Hong Kong Citybus livery.

Ford, Gunnislake

Former Oxford Leyland Atlantean AN68/1R/ECW H45/27D MPT 292, 315P are in stock. They were Oxford 985/62.

Globe, Barnsley

Former Yorkshire Rider Freight Rover Sherpa D851 KWR has now entered service, D778 JUB being reported sold and sisters D857 KWR and D506/18 NDA also thought for disposal, the latter engineless. An interesting arrival is C803 KBT, a rare ex-West Yorkshire PTE Leyland Cub CU435/Optare DP33F.

Go-Ahead Northern

Further ex-Tyne & Wear Metro-Cammell-bodied Leyland Atlanteans withdrawn are 3684/6/8/9/99 (VFT 184T etc), 3721/8 (YNL 221/8V). Sister 3720 (YNL 220V) is now with Weardale Motor Services, Leyland National 4565 (SGR 565R) passing to Waddell, Lochwinnoch and Leyland Leopards 5085 (TUP 585V), 5094/5 (LFT 94/5X) with Willowbrook bodywork and 5108 (EGR 708S) with Plaxton body are now with Stephenson of Easingwold.

Go Whittle

Dennis Dart/Reeve Burgess demonstrator J648 XHL has been noted in use on service at Cookley village on hire.

Hampshire Bus

Acquired is 30 (G30 PSR), a 1989 Iveco 49.10 with Robin Hood B23F body ex-Southdown 934 and originally Magicbus, Scotland 030. Southdown Leyland National 798 (CBV 798S) is on loan at Winchester as is Iveco 49.10 955 (D935 EBP), which has just returned from accident repair work at Plaxton.

The Leyland Olympians are numbered 220-4; so far 223/4 (J623/4 GCR) have been recorded.

Harris, Grays

New are J582/3 WVX, Mercedes-Benz 709Ds with Alexander B25F bodywork, replacing Scania N113DRB/Alexander E307 EVW which has joined the Nottingham fleet as 359. MCW-bodied Daimler Fleetline DMS JGU 275K has gone for scrap as has ex-Eastbourne East Lancs-bodied Leyland Atlantean GNC 521N. Plaxton-bodied DAFs NEV 773/4V and Bova Europa CGP 311X have been sold at auction.

New for the coach fleet is J91 WWC, a Setra 215HD with C49Ft body, which has replaced Berkhof-bodied DAF SBR3000 D402 XWC. Bova Futura FHD C91 LVX has been re-registered 6330 FH, whilst sisters B87 CEV, D92 SHJ have been sold.

Seen carrying Alder Valley West Surrey's current livery is former North Western Leyland National 2 286 (LFR 876X) at Guildford.
B. M. GILBERT

Haven Coaches, Newhaven, is a new operator in the Brighton area. Former RM933, which carries a livery similar to that used latterly by Ensign, is used on the service between Brighton and Newhaven.
TERRY S. BLACKMAN

Maidstone & District now has three Reeve Burgess-bodied Dennis Darts.
NICK COLEMAN



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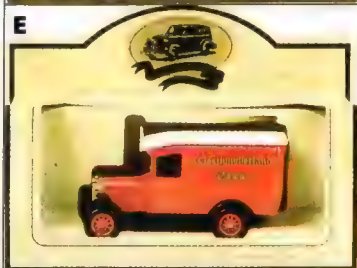
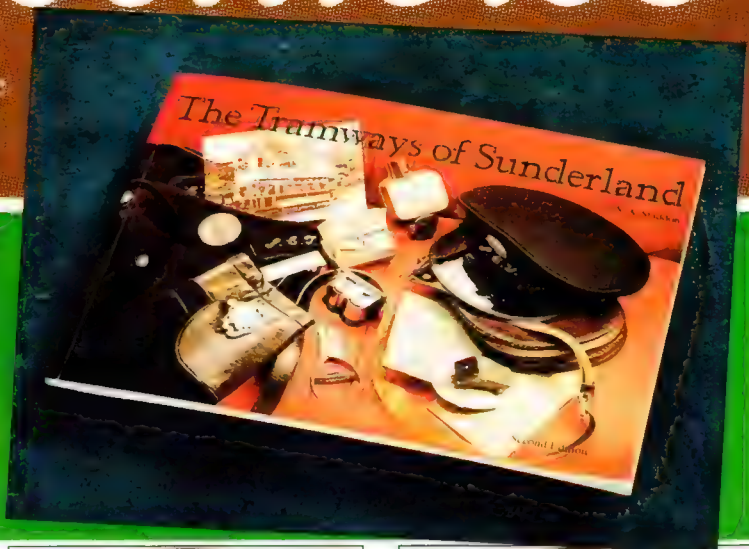
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Harrogate & District

Leyland Lynxes 324/5 have had their cream and blue York, City & District colours modified, their blue bands being overpainted red so eliminating cream/blue at Harrogate. Leyland Olympian 317 (B517 UWW) has four rows of glass fibre anti-vandal seats at the rear of the upper saloon; it is thought that this rather drastic expedient for Harrogate was introduced whilst it was at York.

Harrogate Independent

Dodge S56/Northern Counties D926 KWW has suffered serious fire damage and is now stored. Interestingly, the remains of sister D923 KWW have been re-acquired from North, Sherburn-in-Elmet (dealer) for long-term repair of the former!

Hastings Buses

Southdown Leyland National 11351A/2R/B44D 75 (YCD 75T) has joined this fleet along with MSU 466 (originally D526 ESG), a 1987 Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RH with Duple 340 C53Ft body from Fife Scottish.

Withdrawals have claimed Leyland Nationals 1, 11 and 15 (PTF 753L, TRN 811V, HCA 975N), East Lancs-bodied Leyland Atlanteans 518/25/6 (GHC 518/25N, RDY 726S), ECW-bodied Bristol VRT/SL3 531 (WKO 131S), Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 813/4 (C813/4 DSY) and Willowbrook-bodied Leyland Leopard 1156 (GKK 156V), with sister 1154 (472 YMF, originally CKR 154T) due to follow suit. The Mercedes midis have gone to Southdown along with Leyland National 11 for use on service 8 at Eastbourne.

AEC Regent V 946 (MFN 946F) has had hopper-style opening windows fitted to its lower saloon — having spent much of its life as a publicity unit with only fixed windows in place, it now requires more ventilation. Open-top VRT 570 (HKE 690L) has now retired beneath its tarpaulin for hibernation.

Haven Coaches, Newhaven

A second Routemaster, RM960 (WLT 960), has been placed in service. A new service is H2 which runs between Brighton Churchill Square and Seaford on an hourly headway. Further interesting acquisitions are 1967 Leyland Atlantean PDR1/1s JKE 336/8E, with rare Massey H43/31F bodywork, particularly uncommon on rear-engined double-deckers. Both were new to Maidstone Corporation, as 36/8, but latterly with Beestons of Hadleigh. 36 entered service in Theobalds, Long Melford livery but 38 was undergoing full repaint to blue/grey before entering service. A newer double-decker acquired is Daimler Fleetline/Park Royal H45/28D KUC 113P of the ubiquitous DMS-class.

Hedingham & District

Now in stock is L193 (D600 MVR), a Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RZ with Plaxton C53F bodywork ex-Shearings, which features low driving position, and L194 (JVV 271W) a rare Bristol VRT/SL3/680/ECW H43/31F bodywork which, as its type code shows, has a Leyland O.680 engine. The latter was previously Brighton & Hove 271.

Withdrawals are Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopard L134 (KAD 351V) and, sadly, 1965 AEC Renown 3B3RA/Weymann O40/30F L179 (DAU 379C) whose musical tones will now fortunately grace the Partridge fleet at Hadleigh, Suffolk.

Hunts, Alford

The double-deck fleet has now been renumbered: DECK1 (KJD 70P), DECK2 (MLH 441L), DECK3 (GHH 970N), DECK4 (NHH 406P) and DECK5 (HDL 406N).

Keighley & District

Acquired is former Sovereign Bus & Coach TP63 (B263 KPF), now 245 in this fleet. It is a Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2R with Plaxton DP49F body. It initially appeared in green without fleetnames, fleetnumbers, blinds or Wayfarer equipment and was restricted to school specials.

Leyland Olympian 384 has been outshopped in the same new experimental livery as sister 388. Similar 356/8/63/7/73 now have fixed upper saloon front windows, whilst Leyland Lynxes continue to be fitted with front wheelarch 'whiskers' — brushes to cut out spray to mirrors.

London & Country

Withdrawals have struck Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tigers TP39, 98 (A139 EPA, A898 KAH) and TPL60, 88 (A160 EPA, B288 KPF) and also Northern Counties-bodied Volvo B10M-50s 644-7 (G644-7 BPH), these all moving north to Bee Line Buzz at Manchester. Leyland Atlantean AN228 now wears an overall advert for London Garage.

London Buslines

New are 631/2/4-6 (J31/2/4-6 KLR), Mercedes-Benz 811Ds with Reeve Burgess bodywork to B28F layout.

Luton & District

Six Mercedes-Benz 709Ds with Reeve Burgess B25F bodywork have been acquired from Carlton PSV (dealer), having been used initially by Metrobus of Orpington, then Kentish Bus before again working with Metrobus. They are 6-11 (F121-5/8 TRU), 6, 7 and 9 being received in Kentish Bus livery, 8, 10 and 11 in Metrobus colours. All have been repainted to L&D livery and are based at Luton.

Withdrawals to note are ECW-bodied Leyland Tigers TL8, 9, 11 (TPC 108X etc) and TL28 (WPH 128Y), which have gone to Regal Coach Sales, Kirkintilloch, as have Plaxton-bodied Tigers TP4 (A104 TPA) and 125 (ex-TPL87: B287 XPF). Tiger 100 (81 CBK) has returned to Luton from Lee & District for disposal. Leyland Nationals to go are 470 (ORP 470N), 504/21/41 (KNH 504N, SBD 521R, BVV 541T) which are to undergo cannibalisation at Luton before disposal, whilst previously withdrawn SNB247 (NPK 247R) is also to be cannibalised. Withdrawn Leyland Atlanteans AN157/69, 235 (VPA 157S, XPG 169T, JPE 235V) have passed to Lister PSV, Bolton (dealer), whilst Roe-bodied sister AN871 (MUA 871P) is also now withdrawn.

Leyland Olympian 617 has a minor livery variation in that it lacks the cream band above the cherry skirt, whilst Leyland National 491 now sports a cherry skirt with cream band after partial repaint, but 533 has been repainted in old-style livery with black skirt. Iveco 45 now wears an overall advert for Chantry Hill Carpets and Olympian 614 for Zilon Business Equipment of Aston Abbots. Leyland Nationals SNB297, 305/46 are repainted in Brunswick green/grey. Vehicles at Watford are now receiving 'Watfordwide' fleetnames. Leyland Tiger VTL1 is now in full Lee & District colours and TPL98 is all-over white, Leyland Nationals SNB447/68 are being prepared for overall adverts. SNB404 retains its dark green matt livery at Hemel Hempstead.

Leyland Tiger NTL2 was loaned from Dunstable to Stevenage to cover for an accident victim, but has since returned to Dunstable and is parked up out of use, NTL3 has been on loan to Derby City whilst NTL2 then moved to Luton. NTL5 has returned to active use at Watford, NTL6 moving to Slough, TPL95 from Watford to Slough. Bedford/Plaxton LD1 is now based at Watford.

Leyland National 466 has returned to active use after park-up at Stevenage to replace SNB397 at that location, but sisters 423/5 have been parked up at Dunstable, 423 later emerging at Hitchin replacing Leyland National 2 589, now parked up at Luton. 437 had been moved from Stevenage to disuse at Dunstable but is now in service again at Aylesbury. Stevenage Danestrete garage closed on 24 August last, stores and other maintenance equipment moving to Hitchin. New premises are at Norton Green Road in Stevenage; Hitchin and Stevenage now form a single commercial branch of the company.

Maidstone & District

The new trio of 9.8m Dennis Darts for services 326/7 are 3463-5 (J463-5 MKL) with Plaxton-built Reeve Burgess Pointer bodywork.

Dennis Dominator/Willowbrook 5316 (WWM 919W) has had its electronic destination wizardry replaced with more reliable conventional equipment. 1959 Leyland Atlantean PDR1/1/Metro-Cammell 5569 (569 LKP) is now registered 541 JCS 75 and is busy in Paris as *Le bus des femmes* — apparently a mobile social welfare unit! Good news is that 1937 Leyland Tiger TS7/Harrington C32F, C558 (DKT 16) has passed from Moores, Derby (dealer) for continued preservation to Mr J. Parslow, Berkhamsted.

Shearings' operation at Tunbridge Wells was taken over on 2 December, with Leyland Lynxes 45-8 (F45-8 ENF).

Midland Fox

A C49Ft Bova FHD12/290 has been acquired from Smith, Kibworth and is 151 (F433 XEG). It was new in 1988. Withdrawals are of Leyland National 3562, 3643 (NOE 562R, PUK 643R) which had Wreake Valley local fleetnumbers 10 and 8 respectively. Plaxton-bodied DAF 81 (917 ETV, originally RJU 310W) is also withdrawn as are Park Royal-bodied Daimler Fleetline 2630 (MLK 630L) and 2883 (GHH 883N) with MCW body. The latter pair are being broken for spares, but the Leyland Nationals have migrated south to the Tellings Golden Miller operation.

Iveco 49.10/Carlyle M239 (G239 EOA) has been given the name *Weekdays with Waddo*. A number of Leyland Olympians fitted with electronic destination equipment are having this removed and replaced by conventional blinds; those affected are 4503-11 (A503-11 EJP) and 4513/4 (B513/4 LFP). 4508 is first to be treated in this programme.

Midland Red North

New is 701 (J701 NHA), a Dennis Dart/East Lancs B42F. A further Dennis Falcon/East Lancs B48F to head north from London & Country is 1201 (G301 DPA), ex-301, whilst A42 SMA is another Leyland Tiger for East Lancs rebodiding, ex-North Western 822, a 1984 TRCTL11/2R with Duple C49F body. Rebodied Tigers re-entering the fleet are 1722/5/6 (B102/5 KPF, C262 SPC) which now sport smart new East Lancs B61F bodywork.

Withdrawals have taken Robin Hood-bodied Ford Transits 130/3 (C430/3 SJU), Duple-bodied Tigers 1601-3 (A601-3 HVT) and ECW-bodied VRT/SL3 1885 (WTU 485W). The last has gone to C-Line, whilst Grimsby-Cleethorpes has the three Tigers.

Midland Red (South)

From Skills, Nottingham has come 400 (F71 LAL), a 1989 Mercedes-Benz with Alexander DP33F bodywork. New 811D/Wright 407-9 (J407-9 PRW) are now quoted as B33F. Rootes-bodied Freight Rover Sherpas withdrawn are 455/66/73 (D456/66/73 CKV), which have found new homes with Cheltenham & Gloucester (455) and Vanguard, Bedworth (466/73). 401-6 have been given 'Rugby connection' names *Dragon, Kiwi, Lion, Wallaby, Puma* and *Cockerel* respectively.

Motts Travel, Aylesbury

Six ex-South Yorkshire MCW Metrobus DR102s with H46/31F bodywork are in service as 56-60/6 (JHE 164/3/43/21/39W) which have Yellow Buses Motts Travel fleetnames. Leyland Leopard/Plaxton Bustler B53F OWX 368X is 68, Leopard/ECW DP49F UKE 830X is 69. Daimler Fleetline 61 (KON 232P) is for contract use, whilst newer 67 (OKW 517R) ex-South Yorkshire is for normal service.

National Welsh

Freight Rover Sherpa/Dormobile 51 (D51 MBO) has been returned to withdrawn stock from Carlyle. Vehicles withdrawn are Duple Caribbean-bodied Leyland Tigers XC951/3-7 (TWO 76, 5 AAX, TWO 84, 605 BBO, AAX 305, 300A), most of which had not been used since National Welsh withdrew from certain National Express work. A Barnsley dealer has taken Leyland Nationals ND417/36 (KDW 363P, NWO 470R) and ECW-bodied Bristol VRT/SL3s LR705/9/15 (BUH 230/4V, GTX 739W), together with rare Bristol Lodekka FL6G/ECW training vehicle 1064 (originally 5 AAX).

Carlyle-bodied Sherpas returned off-lease are 196/7 (E196/7 UKG) and 245-55 (F245-55 DKG). 196/7, 245/7/8/52 have since passed to Bulwark Transport Engineering (dealer) of Chestpaw.

Neilds, Thrapston

Former A1, Ardrossan Volvo B58/Van Hool Alizée C47Ft KDZ 6318 (originally UGG 920W) is now in use as is former Premier Travel B424 CMC, a Leyland Tiger/Duple Laser 2 C53F. Former Bee Line Buzz Freight Rover Sherpa/Carlyle B20F D234 OOJ is also owned.

North Mymms Coaches

A new daily Routemaster service is in operation on two circular routes, each hourly. Vehicles employed are RM1975 (ALD 975B) and RMA52 (NMY 637E), both neatly outshopped in LT-style livery. Services are G1 (to Town Centre, Rail Station, The Ryde, Birchwood, Wellfield Road back to The Galleria, Cavendish Way, Hatfield); G2 via Bishops Rise to South Hatfield, back along Travellers Lane and Woods Avenue.

Northern Bus Co, Sheffield

Bristol REs GHY 132K, VOD 102K and NHB 188M are now in service in livery. Veteran 26-year-old RE HFM 594D is due to enter traffic shortly, but NCK 338J, OCK 350K and HHW 920L remain stored with a decision pending as to their future, still in Citybus colours.

REs YNG 723J, GVO 550K and TWX 195/9L have been broken up by PVS, Barnsley (dealer) for spares whilst similar JHN 561/3/4K, OCK 355K, JEH 187K and NWU 322M which were earmarked for acquisition were not able to travel under their own power and so were broken by Beattie (dealer) for their new owner. RTT 419N is an RELH6G/Plaxton C53F and not as given previously, D191 ESC being an MCW Metroliner DR130, whilst Bristol LHs LGR 655P and XUP 693R which were reported purchased were in fact only on hire for the duration of the World Student Games in Sheffield last year.

Northern General

Long-serving AEC Routemasters RCN 699 and FPT 590C, latterly with Stagecoach Scotland, have been withdrawn. RCN 699 was one of the first Routemasters to find a new life after withdrawal, with Stevensons of Uttoxeter.

Northumbria

Duple-bodied Leyland Leopards 651/2 (SPW 102/3R) have passed to Norths, Sherburn in Elmet (dealer) whilst Leyland National 760 (CUP 658S) was stripped by the company for spares and the remains taken away for scrap.

Plaxton Verde demonstrator H912 HRO has been inspected, but did not enter traffic.

OK Motor Services

A new delivery is J804 TAJ, a DAF SB3000/Van Hool C51Ft. Further ex-South Yorkshire 1980 Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1Rs with Alexander H45/29D bodywork to join this fleet are CWG 709/15/7V, whilst sisters CWG 685, 723V have been modified to H45/33F and equipped to DiPTAC standards. Leyland Leopard/Northern Counties HEN 868N has been downseated from B47F to B45F and also DiPTAC equipped. Bova RJU 130Y (originally 3 TRB) has been re-registered again to A504 KFP. A withdrawal is of Plaxton-bodied Bedford B504 MDC. Long-serving ex-Colchester Leyland Titan PD2/Massey OVX 143D has fortunately been secured for preservation by a new owner in Harefield.

Oxford Bus Company

New are 140/1 (140/1 NUO), DAF SB230s with Plaxton Paramount 3200 bodywork for Citylink work.

PMT

Leyland Olympians DOG109/11 (GFM 109X, KFM 111Y) are now 2109/11 and Freight Rover Sherpas MSR714/36 (D714/36 PTU) are now 2714/36.

Withdrawals have taken Duple-bodied Leyland Leopard 57 (XBF 57S), Leyland Nationals 252/65 (XEH 252M, PEH 265M) and ECW-bodied Bristol VRT/SL3s DVL343/54/79 (WDM 343R, YTU 354S, FTU 379T). The VRTs have all gone for scrap, the Leyland Nationals to Dunn Line, Nottingham and the Leopard to Smith, Marple.

Peter Sheffield

Acquired is A602 HVT, a Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Duple Laser C57F ex-Midland Red (North) 1602.

Pickett & Hullah, Castleford

Now in stock is Dennis Dominator/East Lances H46/32F OCS 727X, latterly with Dodds of Troon.

Premier Travel Services

Plaxton-bodied AEC Reliances 268/70/7/81 (PCE 602R, RVE 650S, WEB 407/11T) have been withdrawn, although 268/77 had a two-month stay of execution with reinstatement between June and August. Leyland Tigers 299 (FAV 566Y) and 335 (JNM 742Y) are now named *Tempest* and *Walrus* respectively

Red & White

Ex-South Wales Leyland National 793 (OEP 793R) has been acquired, but for spares only. Ex-Swindon & District Bristol VRT/SL2s GUA 382/3N and HPT 82N have also been used as a source of spares and are thus most unlikely to be operated. GUA 382N has since gone to D. Hoare, Chepstow (dealer). Leyland Tiger/Plaxton UD915 (AAL 529A) and ex-Tayside VRT/Alexander XR865 (OSR 210R) collided with each other near Chepstow on 7 October, both suffering extensive damage. XR865 being withdrawn as a result. Carlyle-bodied Freight Rover Sherpa 159 (E159 RNY) is also withdrawn.

Leyland National 11351A/1R/SC ND427 (NWO 461R) has been fitted with a DAF engine.

Welcome news is that Albion Valiant PV71 C235 (AAX 284) with NCME coach body has been saved by the British Bus Preservation Group. Most commendably, the Group stepped in within days of this most rare vehicle being broken up from the South Wales showman who had acquired it from Red & White no less than 40 years ago, in 1952!

Red Bus

Acquisitions for the double-deck store are 1211/2 (JVF 311/2S), 1978 Leyland Atlantean AN68A/2Rs with East Lances H50/36F bodywork from Blackpool Transport. Coaches joining the fleet from Brutonian are 282 (DAD 257T) a 1979 Leyland Leopard PSUSC/4R/Plaxton C57F and SN9 (FWH 41Y) a 1983 Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Plaxton C49F. Bnstol VRT/SL3/ECW 1213 (LFJ 860W) has been reinstated for service although acquired over a year ago for spares.

Ribble

Withdrawals have affected Robin Hood-bodied Ivecos 45 (D725 YBV) and 616/9 (D616/9 BCK) which have gone to United Counties, whilst Leyland National 741 (UHG 741R) has returned for more service at home after reinstatement. Iveco 3 now wears an overall advert for Cable Communications.

S&M, Benfleet

The conversion of the last surviving half-cab in this fleet, ex-Leicester City 49 (GRY 49D), a 1966 Leyland Titan PD3A/1/Metro-Cammell H41/33R, to open-top by Southend Transport has now been completed. Smartly outshopped in latest Linklast two-tone green/silver, its first appearance was a prestigious charter for the opening of the new Queen Elizabeth II Bridge over the Thames in the autumn. It took the place of ex-Southend CWA6 open-topper 244 (FOP 429) from the Castle Point Museum which had become unfit.

Ex-Southend Leyland PD3/6/Massey 335 (CJN 435C) remains in regular daily use with this operator in fully-restored condition and SCT livery. Newer ex-Southend 368 (WJN 368J), a 1971 Daimler Fleetline/Northern Counties, has been busy on contract work at the Coryton Oil Refinery, but ex-Southdown Bristol VRT/ECW OCD 769G has failed and is unlikely to see further use. The latter had become a familiar sight around the Southend area with Bender School of Motoring. Former Brighton 55 (JFG 355N), an Atlantean AN68/1R/East Lances has been used at Coryton but is now withdrawn. Ex-East Kent AEC Reliance/Duple 7790 (PFN 790M) has been allocated to Coryton for internal site transfer work along with ex-London Country/Barton Reliance/Plaxton MRR 811K and ex-National Travel/T&GWU Leyland Leopard/Plaxton YTX 322N.

Shearings

Leyland Lynxes 21-4 (E21-4 UNE) and 41-4 (F41-4 ENF), together with Mercedes Benz/PMT 103/4 (D103 TCA, E104 UNE) are now with Barnsley & District.

Sheffield Omnibus

Notable entrants to the fleet are A278/80 ROW, C286 BBP, ex-Southampton Citybus Leyland Olympians with East Lances H47/29F, H46/30F and DPH70F bodywork respectively. Leyland Lynx II demonstrator H48 NDU has been on loan, whilst Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R/East Lances H46/27D 1347/53 (CPO 347/53W) are now in service, with sisters 1345/52 (CPO 345/52W) being repainted to livery.

A most interesting development reported is that Atlantean AN68A/1R/Northern Counties H43/32F 1134 (LJA 645P) has been despatched to East Lances for its bodywork to be removed, its chassis lengthened to 11m and a new 'Atlantean Sprint' body fitted. It is due to return at the time these notes are read as 2001 and it is expected that three more of the same batch will be treated this year.

Solent Blueline

This operator gained the contract for service 52 (Southampton-Petersfield) previously held by Southampton Citybus. However, Blueline has sub-contracted journeys to Southampton Citybus which has Leyland Nationals 428/30 (NEV 683M, JNO 198N) which now wear Citybus legal lettering and are operated by Citybus staff.

Southdown

ECW-bodied coach-seated Bristol VRT 652 (AAP 652T) has unfortunately been withdrawn through accident damage when hit by an articulated grain lorry on Hayling Island and is expected to suffer cannibalisation. Ex-Hampshire Bus 445 (LFJ 851W) has been stripped for spares and has moved from Worthing to Chichester for disposal. Withdrawn Renault 978 (E938 DCK) has moved from Chichester and remains stored. Metro-Cammell-bodied open-top Leyland Atlantean 9 (ERV 250D) went directly to Guide Friday and has been modified along with 7 (ERV 254D) by the removal of the remaining roof dome section. 250 has been busy on the Brighton Tour. 254 moving further afield to Plymouth. Minis 924/32/6/56/7 (E64 BVS, G35 PSR, D411 FRV, D934/6 EBP) took up duty with Stagecoach Scotland on loan following the rather dramatic events there from 31 August. Following repair, 955 (D935 EBP) went on loan to Hampshire Bus rather appropriately, as it originated with that operator. Leyland National 798 (CBV 798S) has been busy on loan to Hampshire Bus at Winchester. 974/67/9/83/6 (E634/6/7/9/43/6 DCK) have gone north permanently to Fife Scottish, with sisters 975/80/1/4 (E635/40/1/4 DCK) due to follow after preparatory work at Eastbourne with 978/82/5/7 (E638/41/5/7 DCK) joining the first batch north of the border a week later. 934 (G30 PSR) is now Hampshire Bus 30 and based at Winchester.

1965 Northern Counties-bodied PD3/4 'Queen Mary' 258 (70867, originally BUF 258C) is still owned by Dubai Transport Co, but has fallen to disuse and is partially dismantled. Sister 264 (95693, originally BUF 264C) remains in active service with A1 Nekhreh Contractors in good order. 3207 (WRU 703B, originally 407 DCD) and 3213 (PRX 201B, originally 413 DCD) have passed to London Bus Export, Lydney (dealer).

Southern National

Incomers are Iveco 49.10/Robin Hood B21F D116 FRV from Smiths, Portland; Bristol LH6L/Plaxton C51F 3106 (SFJ 126R) from the Brutonian fleet as are Leyland Leopard PSU3B/4RT/Plaxton C47F 2429 (GTA 810N) and PSU3G/4RT sister 2439 (LOD 720P).

Dormobile B16F-bodied Ford Transit 190Ds 389-91 (C951-3 GYD) have been adapted to B8F with a chair lift fitted to the rear emergency exit. They retain Weymouth Shuttle livery.

Sovereign Bus & Coach

Some of Lucketts bus services in the Watford area have been taken over, and included are four Wadham Stringer B39F-bodied Leyland Swifts, G111-4 VMM, now with Sovereign Harrow for Watford Bus work, and E283 TWW, a B33F Optare StarRider which has been allocated to Welwyn-Hatfield Line. Also acquired are four ex-Thamesway B49F Leyland Nationals, LJN 663P, VNO 741S, WJN 558S and YEV 306S, and two ex-East Yorkshire Carlyle B16F-bodied Ford Transits, C303 CRH and C311 DRH. Two other Luckett vehicles acquired but not used were Leyland National AYR 326T, which has gone to East Yorkshire, for which it will be converted to National Greenway by East Lances, and Volvo B58/Plaxton VUV 750M, which has gone to Rover Coaches. Also gone to Rover Coaches is the unique Wadham Stringer-bodied Volvo B57, RMH 869Y, possibly the best-known member of the Sovereign fleet.

Leyland National YPF 773T is now in HertsRider blue/cream ex-Harpers overall advert, whilst acquired sister LJN 663P and VRT WWT 124S are also now in livery.

Stevensons, Uttoxeter

Two Mercedes-Benz midis with Reeve Burgess bodywork, 153, 145 (G896/7 TGG), have arrived from Whitelaw, Stonehouse. Seddon 116 (BSD 848T) has been reinstated for further service after a transplant of the engine from sister 117 (BSD 849T).

Leyland National 134 (LUA 326V) has been withdrawn after sustaining accident damage whilst DMS-type MCW-bodied Leyland Fleetline 36 (OUC 34R) has been sold to Midland Fox. Partly dismantled Seddon LSC 935T remains at Swadlincote. Metrorider E219 SOL has been given fleetnumber 146. Leyland Lynx 60 (D401 MHS) has returned to the fray after engine rebuild by the company. Saloons 63 and 105 did not receive Pacer identification as they returned to the main fleet, being replaced by other stock. Midi 223 (C42 HDT) has now taken on Pacer identity however, as has 181 (D176 LNA). 239 (468 KPX) has been re-registered FEA 55L.

Stringer, Pontefract

Former Nottingham City Duple DP53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3C/4Rs MTV 757/8P are in stock.

Sussex Bus, Ford

Bristol RE TCD 490J has now lost dedicated lettering for Hayling Island service 33, whilst a new operation is former West Sussex County Council Education Department's former service 394 in the Midhurst/Petworth area. The Leyland Leopard/Willowbrook Warrior B53F Q956 UDE on loan (*Buses* November refers) came from Cave, Shirley.

Although the summer programme of vintage tours and excursions is now well passed, Guy Special MXX 313 is available year-round for private charter or Chichester City Tour for groups. It is also due to appear on normal Sussex Bus services on special 'vintage running days', with a new tours/excursions programme for the new year.

Evening Argus advertising is now carried by Bristol RE SJA 351K and Leopards SSU 780W. CSU 992, XSU 612/82 whilst SJA 352K carries lettering for Tesco.

Taylor, Morley

Former Keighley & District 1700 (LPF 595P), a Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW H43/31F has been acquired. It was new to Alder Valley.

Tees & District

New deliveries are 5014/5 (J654/5 UHN), Leyland Lynx IIs with B49F bodywork. An acquisition is 856 (XNW 868S) a Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW H43/31F from West Riding (856). ECW-bodied Bnstol LH 1598 (WHN 598M) has been withdrawn as have Alexander-bodied Renaults 2503/7 (E503/7 HHN) and Leyland Nationals 3005/21/4/40/64 (SGR 105/21/4R, VPT 925R, CUP 664S), 3623 (SFJ 137R), 3717/22 (WPT 717/22R).

Some of London & Country's Northern Counties-bodied Volvo D10Ms have gone north to Bee Line Buzz, where they are by far the newest double-deckers in the fleet. Seen on driver familiarisation in central Manchester is 645 (G645 BPH).

C. F. WOOD



Trent has now started to receive its Optare Deltas. 311 (J311 8VO) is seen in Derby.

MARK ELLIS



Former London Transport Leyland National LS187 was latterly 200 in the Portsmouth Transit fleet. It is now in the North Devon Red Bus fleet, in its Tiverton & District section, as 2810 (THX 187S).

JOHN ROBINSON



Teesside Motor Services

The first of two Optare Vectas for this fleet is J124 PAJ. It appeared at Coach & Bus '91 and is the first Vecta for an operator.

Thames Transit

Disposals of early withdrawals are Leyland Nationals 3, 9, 23 (WNO 563L, GMA 408N, BCD 823L), 201/3/8/9 (THX 172S, BYW 378V, THX 255, 141S) and 782 (CBV 782S) to Glyn Williams Travel, Crosskeys, whilst 200/6 (THX 187, 220S) passed to North Devon as 2810/1 after conversion by Bulwark Engineering to B40F layout ex-B36D. Leyland Atlanteans 316/8/9 (KSA 182/6/9P) have gone to GM Coaches, Bridgend and it is confirmed that the fire damage sustained by 331 (UOR 331T) has led to the cancellation of its sale to Isle of Man Transport. Sisters 345/7/50/2/3/6 (CPO 345/7/50/2/3W, YJK 933V) are 1345 etc with Sheffield Omnibus.

Thamesway

The wholesale withdrawal of full-sized buses continues, latest victims being Leyland Nationals 1771/2/7 (MAR 793/4P, PEV 689R), 1808/25 (TJN 507R, VAR 902S). At least some of the reserve Olympians mentioned last month are now in London service and have ousted yet more Bristol VRTs from stock.

Trent

1963 Leyland Leopard PSU3/1R/Willowbrook DP51F 217 (217 CCH) has been secured by preservationist F. Lawrence of Colchester and made a number of rally appearances during last season in the livery of Swords, Walkern.

Truronian

Former Brighton & Hove Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW H43/31F PUF 588R is now in stock, as is ex-Trent Buses' similar PRC 849X whilst from the Road Car fleet has come Bristol LH6/ECW B43F SVL 832R.

United

New are 5011-3 (J651-3 UHN), Leyland Lynx IIs with B49F bodywork. Acquisitions to note are 867 (DWY 139T) a Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB with ECW H43/31F bodywork latterly West Riding 867 and 1413/4 (ERF 23Y, EAH 887Y), Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3Rs with Plaxton Paramount 3200 DP53F bodywork from Kirkby Coach & Bus, Anston (Plaxton having reverted to this name as a dealer).

Withdrawals are of Leyland Nationals 3508/13 (XPD 232N, HPF 315N), together with 1966 Bristol FL6G/ECW H—F driver trainer 100 (JNU 983D). VRT/ECW 808 (APT 808W) is now H43/31F, ex-DPH41/29F.

United Counties

Withdrawals have claimed Routemasters 704 (WLT 908), 715 (820 DYE), 717 (EDS 48A, originally WLT 504). ECW-bodied Bristol VRTs 860/81 (RRP 860R, XNV 881S), Duple-bodied Leyland Leopards 156/63/6/7 (VNH 156W etc) and Plaxton-bodied sisters 242/3 (MRP 242/3V).

Disposals see Routemasters 704/15/7 and 712 (WLT 985) go to Lister, Bolton (dealer), VRT 860 to Gaelic Bus, Ballachulish and 881 to Stagecoach (Scotland) whilst Leopard 156 has gone to R. J. Jones, Clydach and sisters 163/6/7, 242/3 to Greens Coaches, Kirkintilloch. 704 has since gone to Southend Transport and is re-registered NMJ 919A. Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger 112 (A112 TRP) and VRT 885 (XNV 885S) are delicensed.

Leyland Olympians 612/3/5/6 have lost Bluebird Northern livery for fleet hues, Leyland Tiger 114 losing National Express in favour of Coachlinks scheme.

United Welsh

1976 Leyland Leopard PSU3C/4R/Plaxton C47F U183-5 (MKH 622, 733, 644A originally JOX 441-3P) are back in stock from the Brewer fleet. From South Wales has come 1983 Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Duple C46Ft U121 (MKH 48A, originally RCY 121Y). A re-registration is Leopard/Duple U194 (999 BCY, originally AFH 192T, then MKH 487A, AEP 253T) to ATH 58T. A month later, it changed yet again to 278 TNY.

West Riding Group

New are Leyland Lynx IIs 369-71 (J369-71 YWX) for Yorkshire Woolleen and 372-4 (J372-4 AWT) for West Riding. They have B49F bodywork incorporating electronic destination displays.

ECW-bodied Bristol VRTs made redundant by the new Lynxes are 877/9/81/2 (CWY 149T, JYG 429/31/2V). Older sisters 823/46 (OWW 903P, XWU 340S) have been broken up by the company, 839 (UNW 928R) passing to Ashby, Gloucester. Carlyle-bodied Freight Rover Sherpa 228 (D828 KWT) is now with Berry, Crosshills.

Lynx 366 now has its rear registration plate repositioned to the nearside below the rear window. Selby & District buses now have yellow-on-black destination blinds.

Western National

Bristol LHSs 1558 (FDV 788V) and 1569 (PNU 389R) remain in use at Camborne and Penzance respectively, whilst Marshall-bodied 1255 (VOD 125K) also remains at Penzance. The fleet numbering of loaned Badgerline Mercedes Benz/Optares is complex; E807/8/20/2 MOU arrived, the first three being numbered 327-9. E822 MOU was returned as it was only a 29-seater and was eventually exchanged for E812 MOU, a 31-seater. To order the fleetnumbers, E820 MOU was then renumbered from 329 to 330 and E812 MOU became 329. Leyland Leopard 2430 (GTA 808N) remains in service, as does early Bristol VRT/ECW 1057 (OCD 771G), I am now informed. Similar vintage 1053 (OTA 287G) is now a playbus (retaining its 1053 fleetnumber) and was on display earlier in the year at RAF St Mawgan. VRT 1131 now wears an overall advert for Plymouth Pavilions in place of another scheme for Interlink.

ECW-bodied Bristol VRT/SL2 1080 (GTA 50N) has been withdrawn and cannibalised, its remains being sold as scrap. Also withdrawn is MCW Metroliner 140 (B256 AGL) which, with sister 1405 (A760 VAF) went via ADT Auctions, Manchester to Kirby, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin. VRT/SL3 1110 (UTO 835S) has suffered accident damage which has accelerated it into a new role as a tree-lopper. Uncommon K-registered VRT 1055 (VOD 550K) and early sister 1056 (OTA 290G) have both sold for preservation, whilst Gale, Totnes (dealer) has 1058/9 (UUF 117J, ATA 558L) for scrap and 1068/9/71/9 (BFJ 168/9/71L, GTA 49N). ECW-bodied Bristol LH 1562 (GTX 762W) is now with Dalton, Hull whilst Duple-bodied Leyland Leopard 1619 (PDD 102M) is with Girling, Plymouth. Park Royal-bodied AEC Regent V trainer 9744 (MFN 944F) is with Thomas, Clydach Vale.

Regrettably, former Royal Blue 1951 Bristol LL6B/Duple C37F 1266 (LTA 895) has suffered through outside storage at Penzance, latterly through vandals. It has fortunately been towed for secure indoor storage at Camborne, hopefully in order that it may have a secure future, given its attractive lines and rarity.

Wilts & Dorset

Further MCW Metroriders have been acquired, this time from Yorkshire Rider. They are 2383-6 (E227-30 PWY), 1987 MF150s with B23F bodywork ex-2027-30. The ex-Grimby/Boro'line examples mentioned in *Buses* November have gone to Salisbury.

Further vehicles relegated to 'low mileage' status are Bristol VRT/ECW 3324/5/7/8/35/7/9/40/9/84 (JJT 436/7/9/40N, MEL 556/8/60/1P, NJT 35P, URU 691S) and Leyland National 3674 (NEL 127P).

York City & District

DAF/Optare Delta demonstrator G910 XFC has been on trial. Leyland National 2 1321 (LUA 321V) is transferred in from Leeds and is in livery, whilst Leyland Olympian 5207 (G607 OWR) is transferred out to Bradford. Lone ECW-bodied Bristol LH 685 (YAE 515V) is withdrawn along with Duple-bodied Bedfords 1146/76/7 (OBX 453Y, KWB 239, 695W).

Target Renault T234 is now in overall advert livery for the Great Railway Show (at the National Railway Museum).

Yorkshire Rider

Withdrawals feature again this month with the loss of Roe-bodied Leyland Atlantean 574 (SUG 574M), Dormobile-bodied Freight Rover Sherpas 1754/90/1 (D754/90/1 JUB), 1856 (D856 KWR), MCW Metrorider 2033 (E233 PWY after a brief reinstatement) and Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopard 8529 (RWT 529R).

Former York-based Carlyle-bodied Ford Transits 121-8 (D521-8 HNW) have been transferred within Leeds, to the new Rider Cub minibus unit based at Kirkstall Works to work tendered services in Leeds in a blue and yellow livery. 121-6 are first to wear the new livery.

PVS, Carlton (dealer) has taken Roe-bodied Atlanteans 6022/36/46/8/69 (GUG 550/63N, HWT 32/4, 55N) and 6110 (LUG 110P) together with 585 (SUG 585M) for scrap. Roe-bodied Atlantean 6180 (GWR 180T) has been reinstated at Leeds along with Dormobile-bodied Sherpa 1754 (D754 JUB) and Metrorider 2034 (E234 PWY). Leyland Leopard/Plaxton 1545 (KUB 552V) has had its boot panelled over, MCW Metrobus MkIIs 7547/64 (A547 KUM, B564 RWY) have had their rear ends rebuilt and Leyland Fleetline/Northern Counties 7216/20 (XBU 9, 16S) have new front domes fitted. Metrorider 2047 has been outshopped as an overall advert for Leeds Waterfront, whilst Leyland Olympians 5502/8 are now in standard livery ex-Gold Rider and Metrobuses 7590/2 are also in livery ex-overall adverts.

Sovereign Street garage in Leeds, latterly home for the driver training school until mid-October, is now demolished. It closed to normal operations on 1 June last. It had also been home to Metrobus 7575 (B575 RWY) which, when fitted with its guided bus attachments, cannot be used in passenger service during trials. Headingley garage is to be closed with its allocation being moved to Kirkstall Road Works. The Works operations will then transfer to Bradford, Halifax and Huddersfield for west division vehicles.

Yorkshire Terrier

Former Brighton Transport Leyland Nationals 76, 83/6 (BCD 816L, OKJ 507/11M) have been acquired and a retain their Brighton fleetnumbers. They are 1151/1Rs with B47F (76) and B49F bodies. 76/86 wear Brighton livery, 83 an ASDA overall advert.

Leyland National 35 (NWT 715M) has suffered accident damage when struck by South Yorkshire articulated bus 2006 (C106 HDT) and may not re-enter service consequently. Sister 53 has also been hit when stationary, this time by a car, but has been broken up as a result, after less than 10 days' service.

Acknowledgement

As 1991 draws to a close and the festive season is upon us — with the new enlarged *Buses* — I should like to wish every contributor to 'Fleet News' a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a prosperous new year. Your contributions, however large or small, are welcome and all-important to this section; please keep the news items flowing! Particular thanks go this month to contributors A. Barnford, J. Beverley, Blackburn Transport, British Trolleybus Society, D. G. J. Burch, *Bus Fare*, Caldaire North East, E. Cecil, Chesterfield Bus Society, A. P. Churchill, County Bus & Coach, P. W. Crate, Crossville Enthusiasts Club, G. Crowther, Cumbria Transport Society, P. Delaney, J. W. Doran, Eastern Transport Collection, Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group, S. Fennell, Great Yarmouth Transport, Greater Manchester Transport Society, R. Groves, P. Harvey, C. F. Isgar, D. Jones, T. W. W. Knowles, Lancaster & Morecambe PSV Society, B. W. Latimer, F. Lawrence, K. Lee, G. Llewellyn, *Lincolnshire & Humberside Transport Review*, Maidstone & District and East Kent Bus Club, A. J. Marr, A. G. Mellow, Merseyside Bus Club, Metro Transport News, G. R. Mills, M. Mowle, P. Mudel, R. A. Neve, D. Nicholson, Northern Bus Co, PSV Circle, A. Parfitt, M. B. Pelling, D. M. Pemberton, T. Raiston, Ribbles Enthusiasts Club, S. Roberts, D. A. Russell, M. J. Saltmarsh, SELNEC Preservation Society, Sheffield Omnibus Enthusiasts Society, Rev C. Short, J. Simkin, R. G. Smith, Solent Omnibus Club, Southdown Enthusiasts Club, Southend Transport, Sovereign Bus & Coach, F. Spence, D. J. Stanier, C. Steel, *Terminus*, Thamesdown Transport, D. B. Thomas, P. Ticehurst, P. D. Tong, *Transpire*, R. Tuke, United Counties, J. Watson, West Yorkshire Information Service, J. J. Wilkinson, Wirral Bus Club, J. Young (Camberley), J. Young (Stockport).

To reflect the recent changes in ownership of the major operators in Scotland 'Scottish Fleet News' has been restructured a little from this month. As all the former Scottish Bus Group subsidiaries are now in private hands they appear with other independents under the heading 'Private Sector'. Those former regions now privatised are also included under this heading (ie Grampian and Tayside), leaving just Lothian and Strathclyde under the 'Regions' heading.

Reports to be sent to **Sandy Macdonald, PO Box 254, Glasgow G41 4LT** to reach him by **1 January** from the March issue.

REGIONS

Lothian

New Olympians delivered so far are 836-50 (J836-50 TSC). They have Alexander H51/30D bodies on ON2R56C13Z4 chassis; 836-42 arrived in August, 843-8 in September and 849/50 in October. Leyland Atlanteans 911/2/25/8 remain unused since their conversion to open-top. The trio of Alexander T-type C49F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4Rs, 228-30 (EFS 228-30S) were withdrawn and sold to P. J. Reynolds, Northwood in August, and Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans 2, 4, 16/7, 20/3/5/6/9, 38, 46 (BFS 2L etc), 901/3/9 (OFS 901M etc), 920/6/30/48 (OSF 920M etc) were sold to North East Bus Breakers (dealer), Craghead in the same month. Two other Atlanteans, 449 (GFS 449N) and 570 (YSF 570S) were withdrawn in September following a mutual accident. Former Leyland Cub 161 (HSC 161X) is now owned by Pioneer, Rochdale.

Strathclyde

Two vehicles purchased in November were M121/2 (H398 SYG, H844 UUA), B29F-bodied Optare Metroriders previously used by Optare as demonstrators, and now allocated to Larkfield. New Leyland Olympians LO48/9 have ON2R50G13Z4 chassis. Volvo Citybus AH64 has been repainted as an overall advertisement for the East End Drugs Initiative and is cream, red and black with orange front. It will be used various services covering the east of Glasgow, including 22, 61, 62 and 65.

The latest rear-end advertisements to record are those on Ailsas A64 (*Auto Trader*, red and white), A113 (Stewart Cycles, blue and white) and A118 (Harry Fairbairn car dealership, black). Two new services registered from 21 November in response to those of the Govan Minibus Co are M17 (Govan bus station-Drumoyne, Mallaig Road) and M89 (Govan bus station-Drumoyne, Meiklewood Road), both of which operate on Mondays to Saturdays on a frequent basis. In the same week evening journeys on service 21 (Pollok-Kessington/Cadder) were diverted to Drumchapel as 21^P on a subsidised basis as a replacement for evening journeys on Kelvin Central service 113 (City Centre-Drumchapel).

PRIVATE SECTOR

A1 Service, Ardrossan

B36D-bodied Leyland National 10351A/2R AYR 332T, previously London Buses LS332, was acquired by Docherty at the beginning of October and entered service later that month. The centre door is not being used and may be removed at a later date. Meney's Volvo B10M-61/Caetano USV 365 (previously C706 KDS) and Stewart's Leyland Fleetline FE30AGR/MCW H45/32F OUC 37R have passed to dealers. Further to the July issue, Brown's anticipated move to new premises at Shewalton is not taking place at present.

AD Coaches, Dundonald

Another vehicle added to this recently-established fleet is 5 (JKN 60N), a Willowbrook B45F-bodied Bedford YRQ previously operated by Reddy, Sunderland. It has been repainted into a brown and white livery and put to work on the Ayr-Kilmarnock service.

Allander, Milngavie

J232 HVK is a Toyota HDB30 with Caetano Optimo II C18F coachwork new in September. Former Marbill Volvo B58-56 (not B58-61 as previously quoted) 758 WNN has had its Caetano body replaced by a new Plaxton C53F product and is now in use named *Highland Prince*.

Anderson, Lower Largo

The above is the correct description of this East Fife operator. Crystals C15F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 406D G741 DFS was acquired in September, ex-Forsyth, Glasgow.

Annandale, Stevenston

This operator was previously recorded as Kilmaurs-based. Leyland Cub HSC 164X has been repainted into cream, green and black fleet livery with Killie Hopper Buses fleetnames, and is normally used on the subsidised service between Irvine Cross and Kilwinning station via Benslie previously operated by AA Motors. From 18 November a new commercial service was introduced between Perceton and a new Safeway superstore in Stevenston.

Argyll, Wemyss Bay

Plaxton Paramount 4000MS CH55/16Ct-bodied Scania K112TR C214 BOS, previously Western Scottish A114, has been purchased and put to work on the Largs/Glasgow express service.

Avondale, Greenock

Plaxton C40F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU4A/4R HDS 548H (originally ACH 144H, later 5142 SC) was acquired in October. It was new to Trent but was latterly Stagecoach 193 and entered service still in the livery of that company.

Beaton, Blantyre

C750 CWX, an Auwaerter Neoplan N122/3 with Plaxton Paramount 4000MS CH53/18Ct coachwork, was added in October ex-Yorkshire Voyager, Leeds. Plaxton-bodied Volvo CJE 455V is now red and white. Jonckheere-bodied DAF MIA 9274 (previously A58 OTA) has been withdrawn after a fire.

Bellview, Greenock

Vehicles owned by this company are kept at a depot in Abercorn Street, Paisley. Recent additions are D301/10 MHS, Alexander B21F-bodied Dodge S56s previously Northern Scottish NM1, 10. The former has been named *Bellview Sprinter*. On 20 November service 61 was introduced between Gilmour Street and Gockston in Paisley.

Braes, Redding

Former demonstrator B22F Talbot Pullman G639 BHP is the latest acquisition.

Bruce, Airdrie

Caetano-bodied Volvo B10M-61 C660 KDS was dispatched to Highland's Fort William depot in October for repainting from the former Citylink colours into the old Londonliner livery, resurrected to compete with the new Knightrider services. Another two vehicles were to be similarly treated.

Bryans, Denny

This fleet currently consists of Iveco 79F14/Caetano DP24F D55 KTX, Mercedes-Benz 609D/Crystals C24F H961 LSF, and Dennis Javelin/Duple 320 C53F E96 LBC. D55 KTX is normally used on the Dunipace-Denny/Maddiston service 233.

Bryce, Coatbridge

Leyland Leopard PSU3/3R/Alexander DP49F OSG 548M was purchased in August and in the following month OSJ 626R, similarly but PSU3C/3R and B53F, arrived. They were previously owned by Eadie, Glasgow, successor to the Bus & Coach Rental business. Leopard OSG 550M has been scrapped after an accident and LCB 923P has been sold to Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall.

Cairngorm, Aviemore

Jonckheere C51Ft-bodied Scania K112 21 CWP (previously PGE 303Y, 9712 WX and originally DLX 44Y) arrived in October ex-Davies, New Broughton. Monday to Friday morning journeys between Newtonmore/Aviemore and Inverness were introduced on 9 October.

Carrick, Ayr

A recent acquisition is LWW 6P, a Duple C53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3C/4R from the Nottingham City Transport fleet where it was numbered 56.

Citylink

More of the former Highland Scottish red-liveried coaches have been repainted into the current style of Citylink livery including Van Hool Astral-bodied Volvo A852 TDS (now in the Bruce, Airdrie fleet) and Van Hool Alizée-bodied Volvos 2080 NT, 3692 NT and 4234 NT which remain Highland V880/92/34 respectively and are now used on the winter services 515 (Glasgow-Fort William via Glasgow Airport) and 516 (Glasgow-Uig).

Classique, Paisley

An interesting addition to this fleet in September was GPF 875J, a Leyland Leopard PSU3B/4R with Plaxton C15Ft coachwork latterly owned by O'Neill (King's Ferry), Gillingham but new to Southdown in 1971. It was originally registered UUF 329J but later became 408 DCD. It is now liveried as the *Brighton Belle*.

Clyde Coast, Ardrossan

Recent expansion of local service operations continued from 4 October when provision of the Largs local service passed from Viking Coaches to this company. With the service came the vehicle which was used by Viking, Ford Transit/Dormobile B16F B426 PJF; it is now in fleet livery of dark blue and white applied in Midland Fox style with 'Largs Local Bus' legends in yellow. Another acquisition to record is Volvo B58-56/Duple C53F WGB 554W (previously 935 BRU, originally RHS 855W) latterly owned by Crawford, Neilston but new to Graham, Paisley. Leyland Olympian YPJ 503Y has been re-registered 341 AYF. Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-46 G132 DSJ is now with Crawford, Neilston.

Currently in Eastern Scottish SMT livery is this prototype Alexander PS-type-bodied Dennis Lance. Although currently a Dennis demonstrator it could join the SMT fleet.



The highly lucrative express services run by Caledonian Express and Scottish Citylink between Scotland and London faced a new challenge from the beginning of November when a new company, Knightrider Travel, started low-cost day and night services on these routes in competition with the established operators. The new firm, based in Shotts, operates two basic services, from Edinburgh to London King's Cross with intermediate stops at Livingston, Bathgate, and Hamilton, and from Cumbernauld to King's Cross with intermediate stops at Airdrie, Coatbridge, Glasgow and Hamilton. A daytime and an overnight journey is provided every day on each route and in each direction, and the aim of the company is to attract the lower end of the market with a 'no frills' service which should appeal to local communities in the area between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Four Volvo B10M coaches with Duple, Plaxton and Van Hool bodywork are being used in a white livery with brown lettering and were being operated under Ganal Ltd licences until the Knightrider licence was granted. The Caledonian Express response to those new services was that it might not be necessary to compete as there was a difference in quality between its product and that of Knightrider, but Scottish Citylink's immediate reaction was to re-introduce the Londonliner services previously operated by Bruce of Airdrie, with routes identical to those of Knightrider but at lower fares.

Well away from the high drama of deregulation and competition, it is pleasant to be able to record a real improvement in public transport provision in one of the most remote corners of Scotland, as the island of Vatersay at the southern end of the Outer Hebrides now has its first-ever

public bus service. About two years ago the Western Isles Council was given authority for the construction of a causeway to link Vatersay to the adjacent island of Barra and work on this project was completed at the end of 1990. Up till that time the Council has been providing a ferry service between Castlebay on Barra and Uidh Jetty on Vatersay, some distance from the main settlements on that island. With the causeway available for use there was therefore an opportunity to replace the ferry by a bus service linking the two islands.

Following consultation with local residents and the invitation of tenders, a contract was awarded to Hector MacNeill of Castlebay on a one-year experimental basis and this led to the introduction on 1 October of the Vatersay Bus Service. Operated by a Ford Transit minibus, this new service offers several advantages over the previous ferry arrangements; the number of opportunities to travel between the islands has increased on most days of the week, an evening service is now available, journeys are at times to connect with other ferries at Castlebay and planes at the Cockle Strand which serves as Barra's airport, the Nask area of Barra now has an improved service compared to the previous postbus-only provision, and the villages of Vatersay and Caolis on Vatersay now have public transport instead of the courtesy link to and from the ferry previously provided by the local Co-Chomunn community co-operative. It is to be hoped that the well-publicised financial difficulties of the Western Isles Council following the BCCI bank collapse do not prevent this improved service from continuing.

Seasons greetings to all readers.

Clydeside 2000

This company became operational on 14 October when it was separated from Western as mentioned in last month's issue, and as before the head office is at 4 Gordon Street, Paisley which was the home of the famous Young's Bus Service many years ago.

On 15 October a press launch was arranged in Paisley at which Ailsa KSD 90W was displayed with fleetnumber J890, false registration plate EBO 1 and in the new Clydeside 2000 livery of yellow with a red skirt and rear wedge. Fleetnames consisting of 2000 in blue with Clydeside overprinted in red were applied on the front and the upper deck panels above the driver's cab and door. This bus had previously been in Western's black, white, grey and red livery and is one of 307 vehicles transferred from the Western fleet, comprising 107 Leyland Leopards, 57 Leyland Fleetlines, 48 Dodge/Renault S56 minibuses, 28 Dennis Dominators, 23 Ailsa Volvos, 15 Leyland Tigers, nine Dennis Dorchester's, six Leyland Lions, six Talbot Freeways, four Volvo B10Ms, two Leyland Olympians and two AEC Routemasters. The previous Clydeside fleetnumbering system with up to three-digit numbers preceded only by a depot code was adopted towards the end of October, codes being used comprising G — Greenock, I — Inchinnan, J — Johnstone, L — Largs, M — Thornliebank and P — Paisley. Certain vehicles were renumbered in order to group types together, and the following table shows the old and new fleetnumbers of all the vehicles inherited

Full details of service vehicles which passed from Western to Clydeside 2000 are not yet available, but the first non-Western acquisition reported for the new company is OSJ 612R, an Alexander B53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3C/3R, latterly Tees & District 1201 but now as Western L2612 in 1976. It is to be used for driver training purposes, and has been numbered 91, allocated to Paisley. The demonstration of new products started early with the arrival during the last week of October of Leyland Olympian demonstrator J976 PRW with Cummins engine and highbridge Leyland H47/31F body. It was allocated to Greenock and had the new style fleetnames added to its blue and white livery. Service changes in the Paisley area were due to be implemented on 25 November

Crawford, Neilston

Volvo B10M-46/Van Hool C36Ft G132 DSJ was acquired from Clyde Coast, Ardrossan in September, and Volvo B58-56/Duple C53F 935 BRU (originally RHS 855W) was re-registered WGB 554W before being sold to Clyde Coast in exchange. Freight Rover/Made to Measure F831 VSD has been given the cherished mark 935 BRU

Davidson, Whitburn

Two new off-peak, hourly, Monday to Friday services introduced on 25 November on a commercial basis run between Bathgate and Boghall, and between Bathgate and Armadale; the latter service competes with Eastern, Midland and Lothian.

Dunnet, Keiss

Duple Dominant DP27F-bodied Leyland Cub CU435s B101/2 BYS, previously Kelvin Central Buses 2091/2, have been added to the fleet. Duple-bodied Volvo coach G774 DSK is now owned by McClure (M&C Coaches), Elderslie.

Earnside, Glenfarg

The purchase last January of Leyland Fleetline FE30AGR/Park Royal H43/33F NOC 587R, ex-West Midlands Travel 6587, has not been reported previously

New fleet no	Old (Western) fleet no	Registration	Type
99, 100	10,1	WLT 900, KGJ 614D	AEC Routemaster/Park Royal
112/3	170/1	C112/3 JCS	Leyland Tiger/Duple
121/2	154, 433	FSU 661, WLT 471	Volvo B10M/Duple
123/4	190/89	B190 CGA, WLT 364	Volvo B10M/Plaxton
131-9	131-9	B401 OSB, 32 CLT, B403/4 OSB, 705 DYE, VLT 166, 407 DYE, WLT 878, VLT 204	Dennis Dorchester/Plaxton
155-9	955-9	C155-9 FDS	Dennis Dominator/Alexander
160-5	960-5	E160-4 YGB, D852 RDS	Leyland Lion/Alexander
170-81/6	483-79/8/90-5	A170 UGB, WLT 924, A172/3 UGB, TCS 174, WLT 956, VCS 376, WLT 974, VLT 28, 54 CLT, VLT 234, A181/6 UGB	Leyland Tiger/Plaxton
201-6	280/79/83-6	G826/32 VGA, H903-6 YUS	Talbot Freeway
301/8/10-22	261, 308/10-21/00	D261 NCS, D308/10-21/00 SDS	Dodge S56/Alexander
323-55	323-55	E323-55 WYS	Renault S56/Alexander
634-63/5/6/72-5/81/2/4/8-32/4/13/7/97-710/2-6/8-28, 614, 730-2/4/5/9/40/2/4/50/4-6/9/64/6-8/88-91/3-8	634-63/5/6/72-5/81/2/4/8-94/13/7/97-710/2-6/8-28, 614, 730-2/4/5/9/40/2/4/50/4-6/9/64/6-8, 618-21/3-8	VSJ 216S, TSJ 35-63/5/6, 72-5, 81/2/4/8-90S, BSJ 891-4/0, 932, 897-910/2-6/8-29T, GCS 30-2/4/5/9, 40/2/4, 50/4-6/9, 64/6-8V, YCS 88-91/3-8T	Leyland Leopard/Alexander
804-7/11/3/5-8/20-2	371/2/56/7/61/3/5-8/70/91/2	GSC 857/8T, ULS 656/7/61/3/5-8/70T, OSG 57/8V	Leyland Fleetline/ECW
823/4/6-8/32/4/5/41/4/6/8/9	863/4, 916-8, 872/4/5/81/4/6/8/9	XSJ 663/4T, BCS 866-8/72/4T, ECS 875/81/4/6/8/9V	Leyland Fleetline/NCME
850/3/4/7-9/61-3/7/9-89	390/73/4/7-9/81-3/7/9, 970-89	LMS 170/53/4/7-9/61-3/7/9W, HSD 70-89V	Leyland Fleetline/Alexander
890-5/7-913	890-5/7-913	KSD 90-5/7-113W	Volvo Ailsa/Alexander
914/5	991/0	OMS 910W, TSO 15X	Leyland Olympian/ECW
926-9/36-54	926-9/36-54	TYS 256-9W, GSB 136-47Y, B148-54 EGA	Dennis Dominator/Alexander

Eastern

An Alexander PS-type-bodied Dennis Lance in the livery of this operator was displayed at Coach & Bus '91. Another demonstration visit not recorded until now was that of Plaxton Verde B47F-bodied Scania N113CRB H912 HRO from 22 April till 4 May at Livingston. With reference to the November issue, former Leyland Leopard ZH537 (BSG 537L) is not owned by Amberley Travel but was with the dealer West Yorkshire Bus & Coach Sales, also of Amberley. From 25 November the City Sprinter minibus fleet was transferred from New Street to a new depot in Westfield Avenue, Gorgie which was previously the home of the SMT dealership's Commercial Vehicle Centre.

Recent service changes in the Edinburgh area have intensified competition with Lothian Region Transport; from 25 October the former service C16 (Oxgangs-Newhaven) withdrawn in September was officially reintroduced although during the earlier part of October it had been operated as a series of linked duplicates of journeys on other services, while two other changes from 2 December were the introduction of new half-hourly service C80 (Silverknowes-Gilmerton) which largely parallels the similar LRT service 80 and the extension of service 86 (Mayfield/Birkenside-Clermiston) to Clerwood in competition with LRT service 26.

West Lothian changes from 25 November included the extension of X9 (Edinburgh-Deans) to Bathgate, the introduction of half-hourly X16 (Edinburgh-Bathgate), the reduction of 17 (Edinburgh-Broxburn) to peak hours only, and the withdrawal of 279 (Livingston-Pumpherton).

Fife

Some or all of the Northern Counties DPH43/33F-bodied Volvo Citybuses purchased by Southdown in 1989 have been transferred to this sister Stagecoach company. Those noted so far are 940/1 (F310/1 MYJ) which were numbered 310/1 with their previous owner and are in full corporate livery with Fife Scottish fleetnames

E647 DCK is another Dormobile B25F-bodied Renault S56 minibus transferred into this fleet but quickly moved to Inverness in September along with those mentioned last month. Other loans to the Inverness branch of Stagecoach in September were Leopards 210/30/1 while Ailsas 802/3/10/40 were loaned to Northern at that time in exchange for Alexander-bodied Leopard PSU3E/4Rs PE91-4 (GSO 91-4V) which were given fleetnumbers 191-4 for their sojourn.

Gaelicbus, Ballachulish

The first change in this fleet for some time was the purchase in September of RRP 860R, an ECW H43/31F-bodied Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB ex-United Counties 860.

Grampian

Further to last month's issue, Duple-bodied Volvo 40 is used mainly for driver training but does see occasional use on other duties, and was re-registered from HSE 696V to ESK 955 around October. Plaxton-bodied Volvos 41/4/5 were re-registered from F101/4 HSO, F105 SSE to ESK 956-8 at the same time. In association with the 'Buses Mean Business' campaign Grampian Transport has sponsored the introduction of peak-period bus lanes in Aberdeen's Union Street which came into effect in October for a 12-month trial period. If successful, others may follow in streets such as King Street and Great Western Road.

Highland

Following the mass withdrawal of services in the Inverness and Easter Ross area, vehicles taken out of use included D923/9 (SMS 123/9P), Daimler Fleetline CRG6/Alexander H44/31F; L804-7/20/2/3 (TMS 404-7X, XMS 420/2/3Y), Leyland Leopard PSU3G/4R/Alexander DP49F or B53F (L804/22/3); J357/9-61/3-71 (A975/7-9 OST, B891-8 UAS), Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/Alexander H45/32F; and Q407-12 (D317 MHS, D818-22 RYS), Dodge S56/Alexander B25F. New owners reported for Leyland Tiger coaches sold recently include Ashall, Gorton (E187); MacEwan, Amisfield (E190); Ivy, Linthwaite (E271); Cullinan, Moreton (E272) and Shevill, Carluke (E274).

On 19 November the Traffic Commissioner called this company to an inquiry in Inverness when consideration was to be given to prohibiting the provision of local services under Highland's licence, presumably as a result of the sudden abandonment of services mentioned above.

Hutchison, Overtown

Lex B37F-bodied Bedford YMQ/S ANK 317X has been purchased by Pugh, St Helens.

Inverclyde, Greenock

With effect from 30 September this company had its licence revoked by the Traffic Commissioner, but at that time the proprietor's daughter was granted a licence to operate up to eight bues, allowing her to replace the Inverclyde Transport services. All of the vehicles in use are from the Inverclyde fleet and details will be given when available. The services have been re-organised into four routes comprising Kilblain Street-Sinclair Street, Kilblain Street-Oronsay Avenue, Kilblain Street-Bardrainney, and Leven Road-Greive Road via Greenock town centre.

Kelvin Central

The latest acquisition to record is 3215 (A104 EPA), a Plaxton C53F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2R previously London Country (North West) TP4. It is now in the red and cream Kelvin Central Charter livery and allocated to Motherwell. Leyland Leopards NNH 189/90Y have been numbered 2579/8 and allocated to Airdrie, while Mercedes-Benz 1067 is based at Cumbernauld and lettered 'Edwin's Bus' after its regular driver in Kilsyth town service 81. Leyland Tiger 3214 has been allocated to Motherwell and sister 3213 to Kirmintilloch, but the latter has been re-registered from NBD 106Y to WLT 770. Alexander-bodied Tiger 4229, previously WLT 770 and originally A119 GLS, is now A9 KCB.

More repaints into red and cream comprise Leyland National 1145, Leyland Tigers 1218/9, Leyland Leopard 1550, MCW Metrobuses 1655, 2682/3, Dennis Dominators 1719/35 and Ailsa 1951. Dominator 1742 has had its Dunbartonshire Bus fleetnames removed, and similar 1703 has been given a mainly white broadside advertisement for Penicuik Windows but otherwise is now red and cream. The proposed exchange of seats between Metrobuses 1660/2/4-7 and Olympians 2813-8 has been cancelled due to incompatibility of seat mountings.

Kerr, Galston

Bedford YMT/Duple C53F YGD 741S ex-Andrews, Stair, and Devon C19F-bodied Mercedes-Benz L508Ds WGA 839W (previously 1707 AC, originally UGE 147W) and WSX 990W, both ex-Pettigrew, Mauchline were all purchased earlier this year.

Kevan, Renfrew

Several double-deck buses have been purchased for use on school and shoppers contract bus services. THX 292S is an MCW H44/24D-bodied Leyland Fleetline FE30ALRSp and THX 516/93S, similar but with Park Royal bodies. They were previously London Buses DMS2292, 2516/93.

Kirkpatrick, Banchory

Recent repaints into the corporate livery style include Bedford VASs PRE 205R and PSU 626, together with non-PSV Ford Transits BDS 453X and USE 97X. It has not been recorded previously that this company operates two services, from Banchory to Alford and Lumphanan.

Lowland

301-4 (J301-4 ASH) are the new Leyland Tiger TR2R56V16Z4s with Alexander (Belfast) DP49F bodywork which arrived in August/September. As illustarted last month they are in green and yellow fleet livery with Lowland logos on the front and sides, but 301/2 have Rail-Link on the rear. Seat belts are fitted on the first few seats, and the second and third rows of seats face each other. They are allocated to Galashiels (301/2), Hawick (303) and Peebles (304) Bristol VR 855 is also now in use at Galashiels Alexander-bodied Seddon 212 (JSF 912T) was reinstated for further service at Dunbar in August. In the same month several vehicles were sold to Bowen (dealer), Newbridge including Seddon Pennine 7/Alexander C49F 254/88 (VSX 754R, KSX 688N), Bedford YLQ/Plaxton C45F 602 (RSC 475P), Bristol FLF6G/ECW driver trainer 1012 (EHT 112C) and Ford R1114/Duple C53F NSG 166P which had not been used since it was purchased with the Glass business. Another former Glass vehicle, Bedford VAS5/Plaxton C29F USS 416L, was sold in August to Cowburgh, Galashiels for preservation without being used by Lowland.

From 20 September new limited-stop Friday-only service X96 was introduced between the Scottish College of Textiles, Netherdale and Edinburgh.

The Dunbar and Peebles depots are being sold to the Isle of Man-based supermarket chain, Shoprite, with the Dunbar premises changing hands in the near future and Peebles following suit before the end of 1992. Disposal of Dunbar has been made possible by the acquisition of Ian Glass which indicates that Haddington will be used as the alternative base in East Lothian, but it is the intention to obtain new premises in Peebles in due course. Neither of the depots being closed was covered by a clawback clause when Lowland Scottish was privatised.

MacDonald, Howmore

Mellor C16F-bodied Ford Transit B900 BGA was acquired some time ago, ex-Horsburgh, Pumpherton.

MacEwan, Dumfries

Further recent additions include Leyland Leopard PSU3/3R/Alexander B53F OGM 600M ex-Monetgrange, Nottingham; Mercedes-Benz LP0608D/Plaxton C29F KWY 236P ex-Meffan, Kiriemuir; Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RH/Duple C46Ft B874 UST ex-Highland Scottish E190; and Mercedes-Benz 609D/North West Conversions C24F E312 XGB ex-Green, Kirkintilloch. Following the loss of contracts several local services were cancelled from 8 November including Dumfries-Ae Village, English Street-Crichton, Whitesands-Woodlands Estate and Shakespeare Street-Broomlands.

McKenna, Uddingston

NAO 359M is another Leyland National 1151/1R/0401 with B52F bodywork acquired in August from the Cumberland Motor Services fleet in which it was numbered 359. Hourly service 16 (Coatbridge-Shawhead circular) was due to be introduced on 29 November.

Marbill, Beith

CSC 272W, a Mercedes-Benz L207D with Devon 12-seat bodywork, has been acquired from Jackson, Beith.

Midland, Auchterarder

Plaxton C49F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2R RNY 305Y was purchased in September, ex-Hills, Tredegar.

Midland Bluebird

Former Grampian Leyland Tigers PSU 625/2 have been numbered 154/5 and allocated to Larbert. Volvo 202 is currently C47Ft plus tables, ex-C51Ft. The loan of vehicles between this and other GRT Holdings fleets continue, the latest examples reported being Grampian Alexander-bodied Atlanteans ORS 216/7R at Larbert from 17-23 August, similar ORS 200/11R at Alloa from 19-24 September in exchange for Leyland Tigers 131/2, and Grampian Leyland Tiger WSU 479 at Alloa from 24-30 September, then at Larbert. In the opposite direction Leyland Tiger 150 was loaned to Mair, Dyce from 5-12 August, as was 153 from 5-14 August.

Leyland Tiger 131 is now in Bluebird Coaches colours ex-Citylink livery and the latest repaints into bus livery include Leyland Leopards 352/66, 456, Sherpa 602 and MCW Metrobus 820. 356 retains its rear-end advert but 820 has lost the one which it carried for Murphy.

Recent withdrawals include Leyland National 11351A/1R-B52F 1, 4 (OLS 801/4T); Leyland Leopard PSU3C/3R/Alexander B53F 250/2/5 (XMS 250/2/5R); Leopard PSU3E/4R/Duple C49F 262 (131 ASV, ex-YMS 262R) and 345 (FSU 335, ex-ULS 652T); Leopard PSU3E/4R/Alexander B53F 300, 446 (GMS 300S, YSF 101S); similar PSU3D/4R 302 (GMS 302S); Leopard PSU3G/4R/Alexander DP49F 403 (TMS 403X) and Seddon Pennine 7/Alexander B53F 520/3 (LSC 940T, SSX 614V). Of these, 1, 255 and 520 have been cannibalised while most of the others have moved to Aberdeen for disposal. Leopard 256 has also been broken up. Leyland Titan PD3A/Metro-Cammell driver training buses ARN 654C and BHN 740B (ex-246 AJF) were taken out of use in September.

Alloa depot was closed towards the end of October and subsequently advertised for sale, all operations having been transferred to Bannockburn. From 25 November service 35 (Linlithgow-Bo'ness) was withdrawn.

Milligan, Mauchline

The service between Kilmarnock and Curnock was withdrawn from 28 October.

Mitchell, Pleau

September purchases were B20F-bodied Talbot Pullman E658 OCW, ex-Pride of the Road, Royston, and C49Ft-bodied LAG Panoramic integral G956 GRP, ex-Longthornton, London SE8.

Moffat & Williamson, Gauldry

Volvo B10M-61 B706 WUA and Leyland Tiger B509 UNB have been re-registered BSK 789/90 respectively. Leyland Atlantean PDR1A/1/Northern Counties H47/30D STO 535H and Daimler Fleetline CRG6LXB/ECW H43/27D GWA 800/3N have all been sold to Christie, Tillicoultry.

Morrison, Castletown

A daily service between Thurso and Inverness was introduced on 25 November for the winter period, and is likely to operate in subsequent years on the same basis.

Morrow, Clydebank

Leyland National TVF 615R has been painted into the revised fleet livery incorporating a brown roof and is numbered 14.

Northern

The Inverness Traction operation of Stagecoach formally came under the control of this company in September although day to day management had been thus for some time. The vehicles concerned have not yet been numbered into the Northern series as there is still an intention to try to effect a common numbering system for all of the Scottish fleets of the Stagecoach Holdings group.

The vehicles which transferred from Stagecoach in September comprised 106/8 (UWV 608/9S), Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW CO43/31F, 250 (A121 XWB), Mercedes-Benz L608D/Whittaker C23F; 276-87, 304-7 (G276-87 TSL, G193-6 PAO), Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander B23F; 361/2 (FBV 271/2W), Bristol LHS6L/ECW B35F; 363 (SNU 851R), Bristol LH6L/ECW B43F; 364-7 (SNU 853R, WVO 854-6S), similar but DP37F; 406 (NFS 362T), Volvo B58-56/Duple C53F; 407 (866 NHT, originally LUA 250V), Volvo B58-61/Plaxton C52Ft and 411 (458S SC, originally HSP 593W), Volvo B58-61/Duple C57F. UWV 608/9S were being re-roofed for the winter at Aberdeen in October. Other recent acquisitions comprise D934/6 EBP, D411 FRV, Iveco 49.10/Robin Hood B19F, ex-Southdown 956/7/36; E64 BVS, similar but B25F and ex-Southdown 924; and HNE 252/4V, JND 260V, Leyland Leopard PSU5C/4R/Duple C53F ex-Ribble 1252/4/60. The ex-Southdown minibuses were loaned to Stagecoach at Inverness before the transfer of these operations to Northern, but the Leopards from Ribble had not entered service by the end of October. Leyland Olympian LO60 and Mercedes minibuses M35, 40 also saw service in Inverness during September, but whether before or after Northern officially took control of IT is unclear.

Further vehicle loans to record are those of Leyland Leopards PE91-4 to Fife in September in exchange for Fife's 802/3/10/40 (KSF 2, 3N, LSX 10, 40P), Ailsa B55-10/Alexander H44/35F, the former pair being at Macduff and the latter pair at Eigin. LSX 10, 40P had been returned by 1 October but KSX 2, 3N had been allocated fleetnumbers A2, 3 for their stay. Leopards PE91/4 were back in this fleet by 1 October. Leyland National PN4 and Leopard PE30 returned from loan to Stagecoach in October but Dennis Lancet D2 was with Stagecoach by that month; sold or loaned is not known. Leyland Olympian LO30 (TSO 30X) has, however, been sold to Stagecoach. Olympians LO74/5 were still being operated by the company in October on rural services and had not been transferred to Cumberland although they had been converted to single door layout.

Leyland National PN9 has been resealed from B44F to B41F and Olympian LO80 has been rebuilt to single door layout. Many more vehicles are now in corporate livery including Leopards PE31, 44, 53, 61/3, 70, 98; Olympians LO30, 88/9; Tigers CT20, 30/2, 41; and Mercedes-Benz M17. Further service registrations in the Inverness area effective from mid-October were from Inverness to Foyers, Cromarty and Hughton.

Paterson, Kilbirnie

Alexander H44/35F-bodied Ailsa B55-10 JOV 739P has been purchased recently, having previously been London Buses V39 but originally West Midlands PTE 4739.

Peace, Kirkwall

D168 HML is a Mercedes-Benz L207D with Reebur eight-seat bodywork acquired in September ex-Avis. Heathrow.

Pride of the Clyde, Port Glasgow

Van Hool C50F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 ONR 314 (originally TGD 761W) was purchased in August ex-Pizzamiglio, Edinburgh.

Rennie, Dunfermline

J176 GGG is a Mercedes-Benz 709D with Dormobile B29F bodywork new in September, and J177 GGG is a 609D with Made to Measure C24F coachwork new in October.

Rowe, Muirkirk

WEX 826X is a Leyland Leopard PSU3G/4R with ECW C47F bodywork bought in June but previously Cambus 426. A new local service between Craigens, Barshare and Netherthird in Cumnock was introduced on 18 November in competition with Western Scottish services.

Shalder, Scalloway

Plaxton C53F-bodied Bedford YNT XWK 17X is now owned by MacCuish, Malaclete, North Uist.

Stagecoach

The recently-reported rapid expansion of the Inverness operation was achieved by transferring in vehicles from other parts of the Stagecoach empire, as follows: CFS 110S, GSG 130/1T, Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R/Duple C49F or C45F (GSG 131T) — Fife Scottish 210/30/1; E634/6/7/9/42/3/6/7 DCK, Renault S46/Dormobile B25F — Fife Scottish 34/6/7/9, 42/3/6/7; PHH 407-9R, SAO 410/2/3R, WHH 414/5S, Bristol VRT/SL3/501/ECW H43/31F — Cumberland 407-10/2-5; GRM 626V, Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4RT/Duple C49F — Cumberland 626; RRM 633-7X, VAO 638-42Y, Leyland Leopard PSU3G/4RT/ECW C49F — Cumberland 633-42; OLS 536P, OSJ 642R, Leyland Leopard PSU3C/3R/Alexander DP49F and B53F respectively — Northern Scottish PE30, 42; C822 SDY, Mercedes-Benz L608D/Alexander B20F — Northern Scottish M35; D934/6 EBP, D411 FRV, E64 BVS, Fiat 49.10/Robin Hood B19F or B25F (E64 BVS) — Northern Scottish, no fleetnumbers allocated in that fleet; J620-4 GCR, Leyland Olympian/Alexander H47/30F — Hampshire Bus 220-4 and J120-2/4 XHH, similar but Cumberland vehicles. The Olympians were sent to Inverness direct from the coachbuilders.

Of these vehicles, GSG 130T was returned to its owner by 20 September, CFS 110S and GSG 131T by 26 September, E634/7/9/42/6/7 DCK by 26 September, GRM 626V had gone by 30 September, OSJ 642R was transferred to Crieff in October, J623 GCR was gone by 26 September, and J120 XHH was returned by 30 September. Iveco 49.10/Robin Hood B19F D407/19 FRV (Ribble 353/4) were also on loan from September but at Perth. Northern Scottish D2 (A502 FSS), an Alexander B53F-bodied Dennis Lancet, was used at Spittalfield from October but whether on loan or acquired has not yet been established. Leyland Leopard OLS 536P and Leyland National KRS 538V were returned to Northern after a period on loan.

The precise status of some of the loaned vehicles is not clear at present in view of the transfer of the Inverness area operations to Northern during September; many of the vehicles on loan at that time are understood to have been acquired by Northern in October, but further details will be given in due course. Twenty-nine vehicles from this fleet were, however, transferred to Northern with these operations and full details of them are given under Northern

Despite this, other vehicles have been added to this fleet including 030 (TSO 30X), Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/ECW H45/32F ex-Northern LO30, 087 (RJT 157R), Bnstol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW H43/31F ex-Hampshire Bus 366; 104/10/1 (OVV 850/46R, XNV 881S), similar to 087 but ex-United Counties 850/46/81 and 174-85 (PRM 628-32X, KVV 237/40V, UVV 150-4W), Leyland Leopard PSU3F/4R/Willowbrook C49F, all ex-Cumberland although 179-85 started life as United Counties 237/40, 150-4. 1747/7/9-81 were quickly re-registered OVL 473, MSV 533, BSK 756, 4585 SC and 4009 SC. Consequently, Volvo B58s 404/5/8/12 are now registered USP 738S, ASP 331T, ESN 640V, MSL 21X ex-BSK 756, OVL 473, 4009 SC and MSV 533 respectively.

Other re-registrations to record are those of Leyland Olympian 019 from TSO 190 to 9492 SC and Leyland Leopard 192 (originally ACH 143H) from 9492 SC to RSR 844H. These latter re-registrations took place in September when 192 was also temporarily reinstated together with sisters 190 (RSR 832H) and 191 (147 YFM), but all three were again withdrawn and for sale in October. Similar 193 (HDS 548H) has been sold to Avondale, Greenock and two other buses from this fleet also now in that town are Leyland Nationals 218/22 (PJT 261R, GTL 355N) which are owned by Inverclyde Transport. Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3/3R 199 (GLS 265N) was sold to Hampshire Bus in September. Withdrawn Bristol Lodekkas 075-7 (GRX 129/31/2D) are being stored at Northern's Stonehaven depot, while preserved Leyland Tiger PS1 001 (DGS 625) and Bristol MW6G 002 (HDV 639E) have been moved from Spittalfield to Northern's Braemar outstation for further storage. 002 has recently been restored to running order and repainted into basic Stagecoach livery without fleetnames or numbers.

Sadly, the link with the former A&C McLennan business is now being broken with the closure of Spittalfield as an operational depot at the end of October, with platform staff and most vehicles being transferred to the Inverlaimond premises in Perth from 25 October onwards. The site at Spittalfield was not being totally abandoned immediately, as two or three vehicles were to be outstationed there for a short time.

Steele, Dumfries

Vehicles taken over from Creighton, Moffat in May were Plaxton C53F-bodied YMTs ATY 147V, YSC 433W and Duple C45F-bodied Bedford YLQ TGG 78W.

Stewart, Dalkeith

DP48F Leyland National 1151/1R/0404 PFM 869M was acquired from Fallon, Dunbar last July. Commercial service S40 (Arniston-Fairmilehead) was reduced to a peak hours only operation from 25 November.

Strathtay

More vehicles from the south joined this fleet in October, comprising SB6, 7 (KKY 833P, OWE 858R), Bristol VRT/SL3/501s with ECW H43/34F and H43/31F bodywork respectively, previously Yorkshire Traction 833/58, and SS28 (E104 UNE), Mercedes-Benz 609D/PMT C19F ex-Shearings 104. All three have been allocated to Dundee. The service fleet has also obtained a vehicle from Yorkshire Traction, Leyland Leopard PSU3B/4R tow wagon YHE 236J, which was numbered L9 by its previous owner.

Another interesting acquisition is the chassis of Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R A508 HVT for refurbishment and rebodbing although not necessarily for the Strathtay fleet. It was previously North Devon 2508 and had Plaxton C50F coachwork. Duple C46Ft-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3Rs ST3 (WLT 743, originally VSS 4X) and ST17 (821 DYE, previously XDS 685W, 17 CLT, originally BSG 546W) are to be rebodied by East Lancs as buses.

Leyland Tigers ST19, 21/2 are now in Strathtay Coaches livery ex-Central red and cream or Monklands Bus blue and grey (ST22), while Tiger saloon SBT3 and Renault minibuses SS6, 9 have lost their rear end advertisements for Cameron Motors. Alexander H44/35F-bodied Ailsa B55-10s SV1-3 (YMS 701-3R) have been withdrawn.

Tayside

The overall advertising livery on Ailsa 70 is red and yellow although the front remains in fleet colours. Ford R1114 223 is used mainly for driver training but it is to remain as a PSV meantime. Ailsas 1, 2 are now H44/34F ex-H44/31D and 58-60, 78 are H48/36F ex-H51/33D. Dodge 203 has been written off following its accident. New owners for Ailsas sold recently are Roberts, Rothiemay (127) and Roberts, Cefn Mawr (129/39). The Bus Shop in Commercial Street has been closed but similar facilities are available in the Littlewoods department store.

Valley, Ardrossan

This company, previously based in Kilbirnie, introduced a new circular service in West Kilbride and Seamill from 25 October. This 20min frequency facility with placing journeys registered between Seamill and Ardrossan competes with the traditional Clyde Coast service linking these areas.

Western

This company was purchased from the Scottish Transport Group on 14 October by MM&S 2068 Ltd, a holding company owned by the management and employees of Western Scottish. On the same day the northern operations of Western were sold to Clydeside 2000 plc, restoring Western to its pre-1989 position except that Rothesay remains with the parent company. Details of the 307 buses and coaches sold to Clydeside 2000 are given above under that company. It is intended in due course that MM&S 2068 Ltd will be renamed Western Scottish Holdings Ltd and that Western Scottish Omnibuses Ltd will be renamed Western Scottish Buses Ltd. MM&S 2068 also purchased the dormant Clydeside Scottish Omnibuses Ltd and the intention is to rename this company Western Engineering Ltd, though remaining dormant meantime. Western Scottish was unique among SBG companies in being registered in England; until recently the registered office was 298 Regent Street, London but is now Plumtree Court, London.

Seddon display bus is the first vehicle to receive a new style fleetname which may or may not be repeated; it incorporates red 'lips' around the standard Western block names, together with the legends 'Employee owned company' and 'Altogether the better service'. Before the Western/Clydeside split, Leopard L662 was repainted from Taggarts overall advertisement into Clydeside red and yellow. Other repaints to record are those of Fleetline R854 into the current bus livery ex-black, white and grey, and Dorchester N405 into the coach livery ex-dual purpose version. Former Scania/Plaxton A114 (C214 BOS) is now in the fleet of Argyll Coaches, Wemyss Bay.

Whitelaw, Stonehouse

Recent purchases comprise HEF 380N, Leyland Leopard PSU3C/4R/Plaxton DP55F ex-Dickson, Dumfries; JND 257/8V, Leopard PSU5C/4R/Duple C50F ex-Ribble 1257/8; and MRJ 280W, Leopard PSU5D/4R/Plaxton C50F ex-Ribble 180. Former Dickson Leopard PSU3C/4R/Duple C51F SW 8480 (previously WTG 64T) has been broken up and Reebur-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D G901 MNS is now owned by Allander, Milngavie.

For the first time ever late-night bus services, running until 03.00hrs, will be available in Dublin and other cities such as Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Galway and Sligo in the period around Christmas. The initiative is aimed at reducing drinking and driving over the Christmas period and the Minister for Transport is granting temporary licences for private operators to provide the services.

In Dublin both Dublin Bus and private operators will provide services over about 12 radial routes which in some cases will witness the first on-street competition for more than 50 years. Buses will run at an hourly frequency from midnight to 03.00 for a flat fare of IR£2.00 and will run most nights having started on 6 December, due to finish in the first week of January.

It appears that most of the services in provincial cities will be provided by private operators, as Bus Eireann does not feel they will be economic.

Trade Union sources contend the initiative is merely the start of privatisation and has challenged the Minister to state it is the first stage, given that the Bus Competition bill is in the drafting stage.

In overall terms it is a welcome move for the consumer and should show whether there is a reasonable demand for such a services, as well as providing a measure of road safety over the festive season.

IRISH MAJOR OPERATORS

Ulsterbus

More new Wrights 25-seat-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds received during October were 866/777/8 (TXI 7866 etc). 866 is allocated at Bangor, 867 to Craigavon and 877/8 to Coleraine.

Buses taken out of the reserve fleet and returned to service in October include Leyland Leopards 1974/84/5 NOI 1974 etc), which have gone to Londonderry, Magherafelt and Coleraine respectively, and Bristol RELs 2133/4 (MOI 2133/4), which have gone to Derry City. On the other hand ex-Lothian Leyland Atlantean 900 (WFS 280K) was delicensed in the same month and returned to the reserve fleet.

Buses sold in October were ex-Strathclyde Leyland Atlantean 975 (OYS 199M), which has gone to Loughanmore Horse Trials Association, Co Antrim, and Wrights Contour C53F-bodied Leyland Tiger 540 (B272 AMG) has passed to the London Borough of Havering for school use after the fitting of a wheelchair lift by Wrights. During the same period Beattie of Hillsborough acquired Leyland Atlanteans 977/9 (OYS 205M, ex-Strathclyde, SSF 371H, ex-Lothian) and Bedford YRQ 1748 (HOI 1748) for breaking.

A revised timetable for East Region (No 1) came into operation from 11 November. A rare happening was the withdrawal of service 40^A Market Hill-Hamiltonsbawn-Richhill from 2 December, due to lack of demand. However services were improved on the Omagh town routes, 84^A Strathroy, 84^B Killyclogher, 84^C Tamlaght Road (Culmore), 84^D Tyrone & Fermanagh Hospital, 84^E Mullaghmore and Lisanelly Heights and 84^{E/1} Dergmoney from 24 October. 84^C, 84^E and 84^{E/1} are Busybus routes. A new Busybus service, 313 Belfast-Hydebank Centre, came into operation from 2 September last on a trial basis. It leaves the Europa Buscentre at 09.30, 10.30, 13.45 and 14.45 on Tuesdays-Saturdays.

Flexibus Talbot Express/Wright C12F No 4 (GX1 5004) was withdrawn from 25 October and earmarked for disposal. MCW Metroriders 1803/4 (LXI 4803/4) were transferred from Ulsterbus at Coleraine to Belfast (Great Victoria Street) as from 1 November. Flexibus has produced its first timetable, a modest four-page booklet, for three new services in North Belfast which commenced on 14 October serving the Abbeycentre shopping complex. The services are 1, from Collinbridge (Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays), 2 from Serpentine (weekdays) and 3 from Mossley (Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays). All services are operated by Mercedes-Benz 609D 806 (LXI 6806), recently repainted in overall advertising livery for the Abbeycentre.

Reports on Irish vehicles to be sent to
R. C. Ludgate, 253 Lower Braniel Road, Belfast BT5 7NR.

Citybus

More new Leyland Tiger TR2R56V16Z4s with Alexander (Belfast) B51F+22 bodywork received during October were 2669-74/6/7 (VXI 2669 etc), all of which are allocated to Short Strand. 2671 was exhibited on the Alexander stand at Coach & Bus '91 in Birmingham.

In consequence of the continuing delivery of new buses several vehicles have been delicensed, including five of the early Bristol RELs dating from 1976/77. They are 2058 (LOI 2058), 2154/6/61/97 (POI 2154 etc), which were put into the reserve fleet from 31 October. Also delicensed at the same time were Leyland Lynxes 3011/2 (HXI 3011/2). Alexander (Belfast)-bodied Leyland B21s 3002-4 (WOI 3002-4) have been sold to Ipswich Buses, where they join 3000/1/5, rendering the type extinct in both Ulsterbus and Citybus fleets.

Registrations are now to hand for the eight 12m coaches with Alexander Q-type DP53F+24 bodywork, 1400-7, currently on order for Cityexpress services; they will be WX1 1400-7.

More Bristol RELs observed with the new-style fleetnumbers are 2308/9/17/26/30/3, 2417/55/69/89/92/4/7, 2500/2/3/6/13/7/33/42/5/53/64/7/9/71. Leyland Tiger 2631 (NXI 4631) is the first of this type to be fitted with a new design of Bupack Skybreaker advertising roof panel, which is completely different from those fitted to a large proportion of Bristol RELs as well as four Leyland Tigers, including 2634. 2609/23/35 have been observed similarly treated and it is understood that about 20 Tigers in all will be fitted with the new-style boards.

Dublin Bus

New Leyland Olympians in service at Phibsborough are RH117-20 (91 D 10117-20). They have displaced Atlanteans DF528/66-8/85 (528 ZD, 566-8/85 ZU), leaving just 12 PDR1A/1s in service, and it is unlikely that these will last long into 1992.

The present order for Olympians will be completed with the delivery of RH123, but it is gathered that another batch has been ordered to follow on. It is also gathered that four MCW Metroriders, MB6-9 (88 D 31237/8/6/5) have been sold to Scotland, possibly to Strathclyde Buses. As a result Mercedes-Benz MW1, 2, 4 (90 D 5001/2/4) have replaced MB6-8 on Phibsborough's minibus route 210. Donnybrook on the other hand retains sufficient Metroriders for routes 201/2 with MB10-5.

Summerhill routes 16/16^A have been revised with some journeys serving a new shopping complex, Omni Park, on the north side of the city. Donnybrook's cross-suburban route 17 is diverted to serve the Smurfit Business School at Blackrock.

Donnybrook's Bombardier KD150 has entered service in all-over advertising livery for REHAB Bottlebank and is sponsored by Irish Distillers. Van Hool AN68 DF816, previously an overall advertisement for Radon, has reverted to fleet livery. Bombardier KD359, in Golden Pages livery, is currently on loan to Ringsend, having also been in Clontarf for a month.

Bus Eireann

The dispute over the use of private operators to augment express services at peak periods, which halted all services from Broadstone garage in Dublin for most of October, was resolved just before the autumn public holiday weekend (26-28 October). Both sides agreed to a study of fleet requirements and passenger numbers.

Leyland Tiger TE7 (88 D 19007) has been withdrawn and scrapped after the accident in Killeagh, Co Cork, in 1989. As expected PL53 (84 D 708) is also withdrawn following the fire at Rosslare.

Schoolbuses withdrawn are Ford Transit SF109 (126 VZO) and Bedford SB5s SS219/30 (EZL 219/30), SS543 (UZU 543) at Ballina, SB5 SS149 (EZL 149) at Sligo and VASs SS68, 76 (EZL 68, 76) at Longford. Leyland Leopard PSU5/4Rs M45 and MD200 at Galway and Tralee have joined the school fleet and are now MS45, MDS200.

IRISH INDEPENDENTS

Ashton Coaches, Lisburn

Ford R1114/Plaxton C53F SVA 537S, ex-Whittaker, West Bromwich, is now with this operator.

BK Coaches, Portrush

An unusual acquisition is former Leicester CityBus 842 (D728 PUJ), an Optare CityPacer. It has been re-registered LIW 4034.

Hargan, Londonderry

This operator, which has not been reported before, trades as Travelux and has acquired Volvo B58-61/Van Hool C49F THU 864, ex-Webber, Blisland. This coach has an interesting history as it was new in 1972 as BUS 653K, a mark many readers will recognise as the first Volvo into the UK. When new it had an Alexander Y-type C49F 11m body but in 1982 the body was scrapped, the chassis lengthened to 12m and it was fitted with the new Van Hool body.

Mills, Larne

New with this operator is Ford R1114/Wadham Stringer B32F OHV 213Y, ex-London Borough of Lewisham.

Roe Valley Coaches, Limavady

Another new operator, not previously reported, has acquired Ford R1014/Duple Dominant C45F PMJ 314M, ex-Causeway Coaches, Coleraine.

Stewart, Glengormley

New with this operator is Ford R1114/Plaxton C53F TUX 913S, ex-Valley Coaches, Bishops Castle.

Right:
Ulsterbus Leyland Tiger 1207 currently carries an advertisement for Harp Lager. It is currently on Londonderry city services.
M. C. BAUMANN

Far right:
Bus Eireann has been taking a number of ex-Ulsterbus vehicles into its schoolbus fleet over the last couple of years, including this Bedford YRQ, BA11 (76 D 76) at Rosslare. It was originally Ulsterbus 1867 (HOI 1867).
GORDON HISUP



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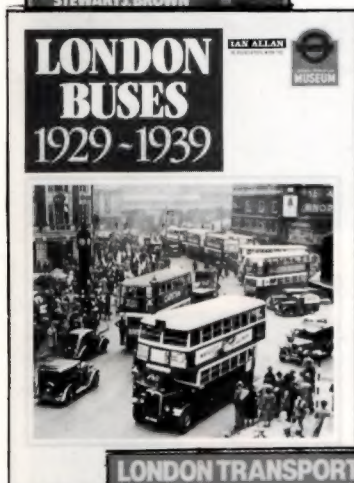
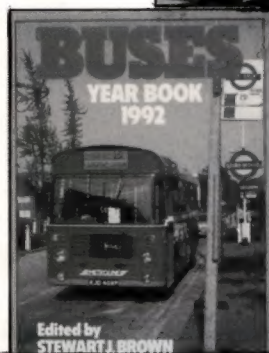
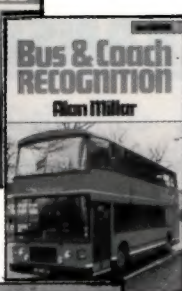
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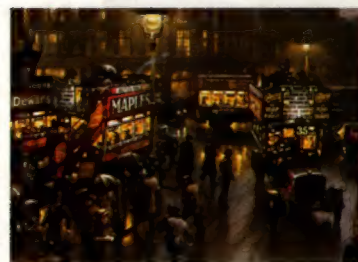
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← RM First day working, Surbiton



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